

## THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY AT OCEAN SPRINGS

If the past could find a present voice, the chronology of the seafood industry at Ocean Springs could best be told by the souls, which lie at eternal rest in the Bellande Cemetery on Dewey Avenue. For it is here in our oldest cemetery that the men and women who harvested and processed seafood for many decades now lie. It was the pioneer families of Beaugez, Bellande, Bellman, Benezue, Boes, Catchot, Cox, Dick, Dolbear, Friar, Kendall, Ladnier, Mathieu, Mon, Ryan, Seymour, and Vancourt that provided the labor, knowledge, and occasionally the capital to develop the oyster beds and shrimping grounds of the Bay of Biloxi and environs.

Other important pioneer Jackson County fishing families who lived along Bayou Porteaux and the north shore of the Bay of Biloxi were: Alley, Bellais, Boney, Caldwell, Cannette, Carco, Fayard, Fountain, Groue, Letort, Manuel, Suarez, Rodriguez, Tiblier, and Trocheset.

Since these hearty people are no longer with us, the following is an interpretation of our seafood history from their descendants, newspapers, books, and the land deed records of the Jackson County Chancery Court.

### Colonial times

For many centuries before European explorers and colonists arrived in this area, the native Americans took advantage of the abundance of seafood in the local waters. Archaeologists have discovered their tools, projectile points, harpoon points, bone hooks, and fish bones which remain in the many shell middens along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and islands.

When Pierre Le Moyne sieur d'Iberville (1661-1706) set foot on the Mississippi coast on February 13, 1699, at present day Biloxi, one of his first observations about the fauna and flora was "some rather good oysters". Further explorations in the coming months by the French resulted in the discovery of the quiet waters of the Bay of Biloxi. They immediately found that abundant seafood, consisting of shrimp, crabs, oysters, fish, and turtles, could be caught here with relative ease. Fort Maurepas garrison ordered nets from France.

The early French and French Canadian explorers and settlers found the fish and oysters of the Mississippi coast to be comparable to those at home. Charles Franquet de Chaville, an engineer, under Le Blond de la Tour, the royal engineer of the Louisiana Colony, when arriving at Vieux Biloxi (Ocean Springs) in 1720, commented that, *"the fish which is caught in the bay is called red fish and is the very best. It is larger than a large carp and its flesh is very firm."*

Antoine Simon Le Page Du Pratz (1695-1775), another Frenchman who lived in the Louisiana Colony from 1718 to 1734, arrived at Nouveau Biloxi (Biloxi) circa 1721. He wrote that, *"the great plenty of oysters, found upon the coast, saved the lives of some of them (new arrivals from France)"*.

### 19th Century

With the departure of the French Colonial government from the area to New Orleans in the early 1720s, the colonists who remained made a livelihood from the sea. It wasn't until Dr. William Glover Austin (1814-1894) built the Ocean Springs Hotel in 1853, one of the incipient efforts to commence a tourist industry here, that a market for local seafood was created.

Indigenous oystermen and fisherman, in addition to feeding their families, sold their excess catch to the local populous as well as providing the many hotels and tourist homes, which developed along Jackson and Washington Avenues with seafood. The steam packets, which landed at the foot of Jackson Avenue, also provided a vehicle for shipping less perishable seafood to New Orleans.

An anecdotal story survives from local barber, Arthur Westbrook (1884-1945), thru J.K. Lemon which tells of Edmond Mon (1843-1920), a local fish vendor, who sold his daily catch of crab and mullet to the housewives and local hotels around the turn of the Century. As old Mon made his way



up Washington Avenue from the beach towards the Shanahan Hotel, he would shout, **"I sell my mullet a dime a bunch, crabs 15 cents a dozen. Crabs, fresh crabs, fresh mullet!"**

Palmetto fronds were used to string up mullet and trout. Four to six mullet were sufficient to load a frond. These were called "bunches", and one bunch was enough for a family meal. Edmond Mon recorded his daily sales by notching a stick. Two notches indicated that he sold a particular customer two dozen crabs or mullet. He collected his money on Friday for the week's seafood sales.

The 1850 U.S. Census (Jackson County) indicates that Joseph Bellande (1819-1907), Louis Kendall (1822-1894), Benito Mon (b. 1820-1872+) and August Ryan (1826-1873) were sailors and fishermen at Ocean Springs, in the early years preceding the hotel era.

By 1880, Antonio Catchot (1826-1885), Thomas Catchot (b. 1824), Joseph Catchot (1824-1900), Arnaud Catchot (1834-1910), Pablo Cox (1867-1942), Thomas Pons (b. 1839), Antonio Ryan (1846-1908), Beauregard Ryan (1860-1928), Calvin Ryan (1853-1893), John Ryan (1856-1920), Louis Ryan (1837-1909), Henry Seymour (1844-1900+), and Richard White (1849-1981) had joined the local brotherhood of fishermen.

### Ice Plants

Since seafood is highly perishable, it didn't develop into a commercial industry until ice plants and canneries came to the area. Although fishermen in southeast Louisiana were replacing the wells in their fishing smacks with ice boxes as early as 1866, the Mississippi coast didn't get an ice plant until the Biloxi Artesian Ice Company was built in 1887. It was located just east of the L&N depot, and had an initial capacity of five tons of ice per day. By 1895, the ice plant was producing twenty-two tons per day. Also in 1895, the Hygeia Ice Works was operating at Biloxi west of the railroad depot.

Ocean Springs had an ice plant as early as 1899. It was owned by Henry B. Gottsche (1875-1905) and druggist, Herman Nill (1863-1904), and located on the north side of the railroad tracks near the L&N depot.<sup>(1)</sup> Two Van Court brothers, John Norman Van Court (1864-1927) and Maurice Kirby Van Court, were also in the ice business here at this time. It is believed that they delivered ice to the railroad. John J. Starks (1857-1920) was another local ice dealer at the turn of the Century.

It wasn't until 1903, that the Ocean Springs Electric Light & Ice Company began operating on the Bay of Biloxi south of the L&N railroad tracks. The Ocean Springs Electric Light & Ice Company was formed by Sidney J. Anderson (1867-1917) and Louis A. Lundy (1876-1941). On November 14, 1902, they purchased a four acre tract from J.W. Stewart for \$4500.<sup>(1)</sup> It was north and west of the A.G. Tebo estate called "Bayview". The parcel belonged to Joseph B. Walker of New Orleans from 1854 until 1891. There was a Mississippi born, Edward M. Walker (1848-1900+), operating at Ocean Springs in 1900, as an oyster shipper. His relationship to Joseph B. Walker is presently unknown.

It appears that an agreement was struck between ice plant operators at Ocean Springs and Biloxi to sell ice only to boats of their respective towns. In June 1909, this alleged pact was violated as a Biloxi factory began retailing ice at Ocean Springs for \$.40 per hundred pounds. Biloxi operators claimed that the Ocean Springs ice plant was selling ice to Biloxi boats, a direct violation of their agreement. It is not known how long the "ice war" lasted! (*The Ocean Springs News*, June 5, 1909)

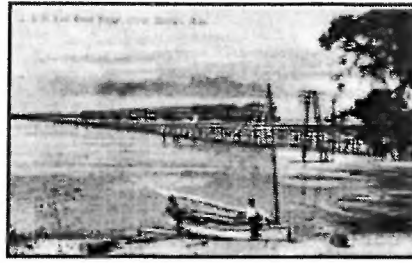
Sidney J. Anderson, the owner of the Artesian House, a small hostel on Jackson Avenue, was the president of the Ocean Springs Electric Light & Ice Company in March 1910, when an agreement was consummated with the L&N to run a 500-foot spur track from the main line to the ice plant.<sup>(2)</sup> On Bluff Creek at Vancleave, Anderson also owned a large mercantile store and several charcoal schooners which he operated out of his native New Orleans.

In July 1926, H.F. Russell (1858-1940), president and L.A. Lundy (1876-1941), treasurer, sold the Ocean Springs Electric Light & Ice Company to Richard R. Guice (1893-1980) of Gulfport for \$15,000.<sup>(3)</sup> Guice was the general manager of Mississippi Ice & Utilities, Inc. and vice-president of Desporte Packing.

By September 1927, the ice plant, boilers, condensers, ice tanks, and two Ford delivery trucks were owned by Edgar P. Guice (1899-1971).<sup>(4)</sup> E.P. Guice built an ice house in February-March 1927, on Jackson Avenue north of Porter. It was called the Ocean Springs Ice & Coal Company. The old ice plant was discontinued and by June 1927, the plant on Jackson Avenue was in full operation



with the capacity of making 9 tons of ice per day. E.P. Guice also owned the Home Ice & Coal Company at Biloxi.



**The Catboat (1909)**

The Catboat was the work boat of the Ocean Springs fisherman until it was gradually phased out by the motorized shrimp trawler in the second decade of the 20th Century. This watercraft carried a single gaff-sail, had a centerboard and was up to twenty-five feet in length with a nine-foot beam. Ocean Springs was renown for its fast catboats and skilled skippers who competed in the annual Biloxi Regatta.

### **Fishing Fleet**

Long before the motorized shrimp trawler came upon the local scene circa 1915, the single, gaff-sail powered catboat and seine skiff were the workboats of the local shrimp fleet. This fleet worked the waters of the Bay of Biloxi and the marshes and bayous from Pointe Aux Chenes to the west. Local historian, C.E. Schmidt (1904-1988), described seine fishing as follows:

*With the first breaking of dawn they would begin throwing the brail nets to locate the shrimp school. When the indications were favorable, two men would go overboard in about five feet of water with one end of the seine tied to an arm pole. The other two men would pay out the seine from the skiff until the 140 or 150 fathoms were floating on the cork line. With two men on each end, they would begin the strenuous haul towards the beach, converging so as to close the seine, and by continued hauling they would force the catch into the central bag of the seine from which it was transferred to the skiff and cat boat.*

It was common in these early days to catch six to eight barrels of shrimp (210 pounds per barrel) per haul with the seine. Outstanding hauls of fifty or more barrels have been reported. The shrimper got \$3.00 per barrel of shrimp for his efforts. Compare this with \$3 to \$4 per pound that shrimp bring today at the Ocean Springs Harbor.

In August 1883, *The Pascagoula Democrat-Star* reported that Arnaud Catchot fishing off the east end of Deer Island, caught over two-thousand red fish in one haul. The fish ranged from seventeen to twenty-five pounds apiece. (*The Pascagoula Democrat-Star*, August 10, 1883, p. 3)

These men who farmed the sea off Pointe aux Chenes had to bring the catch to the shrimp factories on Point Cadet at Biloxi for remuneration. The first catboat crew to the docks at Biloxi got the best price for their daily efforts. This incentive created a daily race from the shrimping grounds to Biloxi Pass. This competition honed the skills of early Ocean Springs sailors, and some of them like George Seymour (1868-1950), John "Coco" Ryan (1859-1920), Clement Bellande (1850-1918), Charles "Caville" Ryan, and Jack Beaugez (1885-1962) were in demand to skipper racing boats in regattas at Biloxi, Pass Christian, and Bay St. Louis.

### **Catboat Racing**

In August 1901, a match race was held at Ocean Springs between two of the fastest catboats on the Mississippi coast. The Davis Brothers, owned by Clement Bellande was pitted against the Royal Flush, owned by Orey Young (1868-1938). Local merchants had put up a cash prize of \$700 for the



race, and the afternoon that the event was held was declared a general holiday. The Royal Flush won by two minutes and one second. It avenged an earlier loss to the Davis Brothers at the 1901 Biloxi Regatta in the Third Class Fleet (16-19 foot boats). Orey Young once said that, "*the Royal Flush, if loaded with all the prize money she has won, would certainly sink*".

Gordon Staples Case (1890-1927), the grandson of Dr. Don Carlos Case (1819-1886), owned the catboat, Royal Flush, in 1917, when it was sailed by Jack Beaugez. The Elizardi family later owned the boat for many years.

Some of the boat builders who resided at Ocean Springs at this time were George L. Friar (1869-1924), Alphonse "Manny" Beaugez (1887-1945), and Joseph "Dode" Schrieber (1873-1951). The boat yards and lumber yards were located on Fort Bayou. In June 1909, Beaugez and Schrieber opened a new yard near present day Anthony's Restaurant. John Ryan (1837-1907), who probably lived in the Bayou Porteaux area, was also a ship carpenter of this generation.

Dode Schrieber's daughter, Lurline S. Hall, recalls her father building boxes to ship oysters. They were 12" square and held a gallon oyster can. Ice put on top of boxes for shipment.

George L. Friar learned carpentry from his father, Thomas R. Friar, who was an excellent small boat builder. George Friar once advertised as a "*builder of power, sail, and row boats, skiffs, etc.*". By 1915, he was a dealer in cypress and pine lumber. His uncle, Louis L. Dolbear (1855-1918), owned the schooner, *Mystery*, and operated a lumbyard on Fort Bayou in 1893, where he sold lumber, laths, pickets, shingles, and brick.

Although Ocean Springs was never known as a schooner, building center, it is believed that several of these craft may have been built here, probably on Fort Bayou for the charcoal trade. Biloxi schooner historian, Rusty Barnes, records the following vessels that were constructed at Ocean Springs: *Lady Alfred* (1880), *Hortense* (1881), *Orita A.* (1886), S.J. Dickson (1886), *Young American* (1892), *Alpha* (1901), *Ramsay Brothers* (1901), *Ox* (1902), and the *Iduma* (1905). The *Iduma* was built by John Ramsay. Wesley Knox Ramsay formerly of Ocean Springs married Iduma Walker of Saucier in August 1904.

Until canning methods, ice plants, and rail service were developed, most seafood had to be consumed locally. With ice plants and canning factories arriving on the Mississippi coast at Biloxi in the 1880s, this city became the leader of the seafood industry. Ocean Springs because of its small population and paucity of commercial waterfront acreage due to ownership by wealthy bay front landowners from New Orleans and the Midwest, never developed a large commercial seafood industry. It did become a small, but well known shipper of quality oysters shortly after the New Orleans, Mobile & Texas Railroad was completed in 1870. Later the Southern Express Company operated at the depot in conjunction with the L&N Railroad and shipped local sea- food, including sea turtles, to the Midwest and east coast..

## Oysters

The oyster is nearly a perfect food. It is low in calories and provides vitamins, trace elements, and all the essential amino acids. It has long been associated as an amatory food. As some of the early French colonists discovered, the raw oyster is a survival nutrient.

Our oyster is a bivalve mollusk that lives from southern Canada to southern Mexico and the Caribbean. It is called the Virginia oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) by the marine scientists who study it. *Crassostrea* means "thick-shelled" which describes its heavy dense shell.

The Virginia oyster thrives in low salinity and muddy waters of bays and estuaries. It grows in large thick reefs which develop from the younger organisms depositing itself on older shells and growing upward. Many times this vertical growth process is essential for its life as the environment of deposition that the oyster lives in would bury it in mud and silt and kill it.

The Ocean Springs oysterman went to the reefs in large skiffs. The reefs were located primarily in the Bay of Biloxi directly off front beach, at Marsh Point, off Fort Point, the area west of the L&N railroad bridge, and Deer Island.

Along the beach front, riparian rights, protected by the laws of the State of Mississippi, granted land owners whose lots bordered on the Gulf of Mexico the liberty of building piers, bath houses, and



oyster planting privileges for a distance of 1500 feet into the water and a width coincidental with the frontage of the lot. Boundary lines between contiguous leases were established on the water and marked with pine poles driven into the bottom.

Riparian rights were legated usually to close family members as evidenced by recorded wills. In the Will of Julia Catchot (1823-1903), she wrote, "I give, devise, and bequeath, unto my daughter-in-law, Mrs. Florence Victoria Catchot (1862-1933), all my oyster planting ground, in Jackson County, Mississippi situated in front of the Charles W. Ziegler property in the Town of Ocean Springs".(5) The devisee was the wife of A.J. Catchot (1864-1954) who may have been born on the W.B. Schmidt Estate, which was east of the Ziegler place, called Lake View.

Charles W. Ziegler (1865-1936) was the son of Francis M. Ziegler (1818-1901), the business partner of W.B. Schmidt (1823-1900). Their firm, Schmidt & Ziegler, was a very successful wholesale grocery business located at New Orleans.

The Julia Catchot legation precipitated two legal actions in the Jackson County Chancery Court, "Ziegler v. Catchot"-Cause No. 1480, January 1906, and "Purington v. Catchot"-Cause No. 1863, May 1910. Dillworth Purington (1841-1914) was a native of Sydney, Maine. After the Civil War, he went to Chicago and worked in the lumber and brick business. Purington was president of the Purington Paving Brick Company at Galesburg, Illinois from 1890 to 1909. He bought the Ziegler place, Lakeview, in February 1906.(6) Purington changed the name of his home to Wyndillhurst. This property at present day 221 Front Beach.

In the law suit against Catchot, Judge T.A. Wood ruled that, ***"Purington was the sole and exclusive owner of the right and privilege of planting oysters and using the riparian and aquatic rights as provided in the statue".***(7)

It is not known what the basis of the Catchot claim to the Ziegler-Purington riparian rights was, but most likely F.M. Ziegler verbally awarded them to Joseph Catchot (1824-1900) for services rendered or on a sharing basis.

Occasionally oyster leases were granted by the Board of Supervisors. In July 1887, a petition to plant oysters on a certain sand bar in the Bay of Biloxi, in front of the land and home of Eugene Tiblier was made by George Melvin, M. Caldwell, and Eugene Tiblier. In June 1901, when M. Caldwell (probably George Madison Caldwell (1877-1965) sold his one-third "rights in a bar which to bank, plant, and cultivate oysters granted at the Board of Supervisors meeting of Jackson County, Mississippi in July 1887" to I.P. Carver, E.M. Walker, and George W. Bervard, the property was described as near the L&N railroad bridge in the Back Bay beginning at 4 1/2 feet of water on the east boundary and running west to 1 1/2 feet of water thence north to the channel.(8)

There is a high degree of certitude that the 1892 discovery of a sunken French freighter near the site of Fort Maurepas (1699-1702), by Eugene Tiblier, Jr. was made on the oyster lease of his father described above. Many colonial artifacts were taken from this vessel. The best known are the four cannon situated near the Santa Maria del Mar Apartments on the beach at Biloxi. It is interesting to note that two of Eugene Tibliers great grandsons, Lionel and Charles Eleuterius, are both marine scientists. They have made valuable contributions in botany and physical oceanography while studying the estuarine waters of coastal Mississippi and the more saline habitat of the Gulf of Mexico.

Using rakes and tongs, the oysters were manually gathered by the oystermen and brought to the skiff. In the early days, the mollusks were opened at the reef, and their shells returned to the bottom to preserve the substrate for future oyster development. Health regulations later dictated that the oyster be brought to a processing plant to be opened.

Conservation has long been practiced in the oyster industry. The Mississippi Oyster Commission was organized in 1902, when the state legislature passed the Bowers Oyster Bill to protect and preserve natural oyster reefs and bedding grounds in the coastal waters of Mississippi.

Appointments to this body were made by the Governor. Ocean Springs was first represented on the Mississippi Oyster Commission by John Duncan Minor (1863-1920). In 1928, the Oyster Commission oversaw that 250,000 barrels of seed oysters and shells were planted. In several years, this crop was expected to generate a million barrels of mollusks.



Here in the oyster sheds along the beachfront, shuckers with oyster knives penetrated the bivalves and removed the succulent mollusks placing them in sizing pales. Oysters were graded in size from small to very large. Small oyster are called counters, and increase in size to select, extra select, and plants. Plants are very large oyster and can be up to one-foot in length.

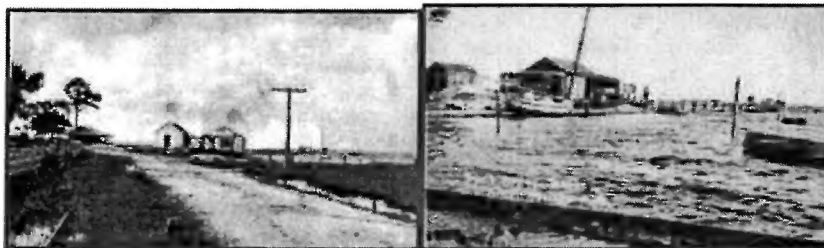
In the 1920s, the oyster dealer sold selects for \$.25 per hundred while plants commanded a price of .50 per hundred. A sack of oyster cost the consumer \$1.00. Today, the oysterman is receiving \$13 to \$20 per sack.

In the oyster shops, the succulent mollusks were packed into five-gallon cans or smaller vessels and placed in wooden crates for shipment usually in the baggage cars of the railway express. The mollusks were iced at various points on their journey to the Midwest or eastern markets. In the larger canning operations at Biloxi, oysters were dredged from the deeper reefs as well as tonged or nipped from the shallower reefs. Dredging occurs when the water depth exceeds fourteen feet over the reef.

At the Biloxi factories, the steam stock oysters were steamed and opened by shuckers, placed in oyster cups (a metal container to measure the amount opened by the individual) and then canned for shipment. Large shell mounds called, "Biloxi mountains", grew outside the factory as the empty oyster shells were dumped there. The spent shells were used for landfill, street paving, cesspool drains, shell grit, and building blocks. About half of the shells were returned to the reefs to form a substrate upon which the larval shell or spat could attach and develop into a mature oyster.

At Ocean Springs, Parker Earle (1831-1917), a horticulturist and entrepreneur who developed the refrigerated rail car while growing fruit at southern Illinois, is credited with undertaking the initial shelling of streets here. Earle resided on Fort Point (Lovers Lane) from about 1888-1892, where he developed the Earle Farm (later called Rose Farm and Money Farm) north of Fort Bayou.

In the Minute Books of the City of Ocean Springs, it is common to find the city purchasing oyster shells from various operators from 1892 into the 1930s. The city paid 5 to 8 cents per barrel for the shells. Some of the local families who sold shells to the city were: Beaugez, Bellman, Carver, Catchot, Friar, Kuppersmith, Maxwell, Ryan, Seymour, Tiblier, and Van Court. The C.B. Foster Packing Company (Biloxi) and the Ocean Springs Packing Company were two of the canneries who vended their spent shells to the city for road repairs and fill.



**Narcisse Seymour Oyster Shop (Washington Avenue view)**



**Narcisse Seymour Oyster Shop (water view)**

(situated at the foot of Washington Avenue, this site was use for many years by Narcisse Seymour and John R. Seymour, his son, as the location of their oyster and fish houses. The buildings were cheaply built because they were very susceptible to destruction by fierce storms and hurricanes).

### **The oyster shop**



The precursor to a seafood factory at Ocean Springs was called an oyster house or fish house. These small, tin, shed-like structures were erected on pilings in the bay at the foot of Washington, Jackson, and Martin Avenues.

Antonio Catchot (1828-1885), an immigrant from Menorca in the Balearic Islands, developed the first oyster house at the foot of Jackson Avenue in the late 1850s. This property remained in the Catchot family for many decades until his son, Antonio "Toy" Catchot (1868-1952), sold it to the Purity Seafood Company in 1941. It survives today as the Ocean Springs Seafood Company operated by the Earl Fayard family.

The individuals and families who built the seafood industry at Ocean Springs will be discussed in the time framework in which they existed. The period following the Civil War until the late 1960s will be explored in varying detail.

## 1870-1900

With the coming of the railroad in 1870, small operators like Peter A. Pons and Antonio Catchot were shipping oysters to New Orleans and Mobile as early as 1872. By 1900, two prominent seafood shipping families, the Seymours and Friars, were operating at the foot of Washington Avenue. Narcisse Seymour (1849-1931) and Thomas R. Friar (1845-1918) were the leaders of these families. Smaller operators such as, Joe Tony Catchot (1858-1919) and John Johnson (1859-1921), were also active. Catchot was shucking oysters at the foot of Jackson Avenue while John Johnson, the son-in-law of seafood pioneer, Peter A. Pons, had a seafood operation at the foot of Martin Avenue.

### A. CATCHOT & COMPANY

#### Antonio Catchot's Oyster Shop: Some History at the Foot of Jackson Avenue

To understand the genesis of the present day seafood factory at the foot of Jackson Avenue, one has to trek backward into the past approximately one hundred and forty odd years. In or about the year 1850, Antonio Catchot (1828-1885), a Spanish immigrant from the island of Minorca off the southwest coast of Spain in the Balearic Islands, settled at Ocean Springs. Catchot was the son of Jose Catchot and Eulalia Derany.

Archival records from the Parish of Santa Maria at the city of Mahon, on the southwest coast of Minorca, indicate that the Catchot family reached Minorca in the second half of the 18th Century, during the second English occupation. They came from the island of Malta in particular, the Parish of the Virgin of the Victory. Malta is about 600 miles to the southwest of Minorca and near the island of Sicily. Antonio Catchot and Teresa Andrevet of Malta were the progenitors of the Menorcan Catchots.

The Bishops of Mahon, when exposed to the foreign name, Catchot, which was rare to them, became confused. They came to write Catchot in eight different spellings: Cachot, Cachote, Cacioto, Catxot, Catxoto, Catxoto, Caxatolo, and finally Catchot.

The first Catchot from Malta was Francisco Catchot. He married Jeronima Neto at Mahon on May 5, 1781. Their fifth child was Jose Catchot, the father of our Antonio Catchot, and his brothers, Jose (1823-1900) and Arnaldo (1836-1910), who also settled at Ocean Springs. Their mother, Eulalia Derany, was the daughter of Juan Derany (also Darany and Daran) and Juana Balduch. In Church documents Juan Derany states that he was from Venice, Corsica, and Trieste.

The three Catchot brothers from Menorca, Jose, Antonio, and Arnaldo, are the forefathers of the large Catchot family of Ocean Springs. After Jeronima died on June 28, 1795, Francisco Catchot married Margarita Morla on August 6, 1795.

Spanish immigrant, Joseph "Jassie" Catchot (1848-1913) who married Marie Fayard (b. 1853), at Bay St. Louis in 1870, was probably a cousin. They started the Biloxi Catchot clan.

In 1854, Antonio Catchot moved on and took possession of a tract of land at the foot of Jackson Avenue. This tract was below the high water mark and was described as follows:



**Commence at a point 87 feet more or less south of the northeast corner of Jackson Avenue and Beach Street and run west 60 feet to the line of the Ocean Springs Hotel. Then run south 60 feet, then east 60 feet, then north 60 feet to the point of origin.**

Antonio Catchot, a fisherman, built an oyster shop on this tract. An oyster shop was a small building about 20 feet square on pilings, which was utilized as a site for selling raw oysters. He also built a wharf to allow the landing of small oyster boats. The wharf extended from the shore to a point about 230 feet into the Bay of Biloxi. From 1854 until his death in 1885, Antonio Catchot occupied the tract and during that time through the accretion of oyster shells and other natural materials, the tract became a solid piece of ground. He was shipping oysters from Ocean Springs as early as 1879. (*The Pascagoula Democrat-Star*, November 14, 1879, p. 3)

Antonio Catchot married a German woman, Elizabeth Hoffen (1838-1916), who was born at Bremen. She had emigrated to the United States in 1853, and probably married Antonio in early 1854, as their first child, Elizabeth Camba Dunn (1854-1927), was born in 1854. Their other children were Joseph S. (1858-1919), called Joe Tony, Mary Anne Bellande (1861-1931), and Antonio, Jr. (1868-1948), who was known as Toy.

When Antonio Catchot died intestate in 1885, the oyster shop was inherited by his surviving family. The Storm of 1893 devastated the Mississippi Coast, and the Catchot wharf and building were badly damaged by the fury of that tempest.

On April 27, 1894, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the Town of Ocean Springs entered into an agreement with a private citizen to erect a public wharf at the foot of Jackson Avenue. Bathhouses on the pier were to be rented to families for less than \$10.00 per year.

As the Catchots still held claim to this land and didn't want to relinquish it, the town marshal of the City of Ocean Springs entered the Catchot land and prevented them from rebuilding their storm torn property. Naturally, this action generated lawsuits from both parties.

In the Catchot suit entered in the Chancery Court of Jackson County in October 1900, against Ocean Springs, the Catchots felt their claim to the land at the foot of Jackson Avenue was valid because of adverse possession, and also that in 1860, the Board of Police (Supervisors) had granted their father, Antonio Catchot, the tract for meritorious service.

One of the tales which survive about Catchot's laudable service was preserved by Ellis Handy (1891-1963) in his "Know Your Neighbor" column of the July 29, 1949, *Gulf Coast Times*. It reads as follows:

***In 1853, the Governor came to Ocean Springs. He had to travel from Jackson to New Orleans and then to Ocean Springs by boat. When the time for his return came, he and the Catchot brothers were waiting on the head of the pier for the Governor's boat. A hurricane was blowing and much of the pier collapsed cutting them off from land. The Catchots swam to a yawl type boat and took the Governor on the land occupied by the old Ocean Springs Hotel. They were heroes and there was talk of a reward. The Governor deeded them the land at the foot of the pier.***

In actuality, although less romantic, Antonio Catchot saved the life of Captain Charles Walker (1813-1860+), an entrepreneur who operated the steamboat wharf at the foot of Jackson Avenue in the early 1850s. On September 15, 1855, a hurricane struck near Bay St. Louis. The resultant winds and high tides from the tempest destroyed Walker's wharf. *The New Orleans Daily Picayune* of September 18, 1855, reported that, ***"Captain Walker was on the pier head of his wharf when the latter was swept away, and there he had to remain all night, and until 4 P.M. on Sunday when he was discovered with a flag of distress flying"***.

On June 1, 1885, Antonio Catchot and his wife, Elizabeth Hoffen, swore before Judge H.H. Minor (1862-1905), the following affidavit:



State of Mississippi, Jackson County. This is to certify that we, the undersigned citizens of the town of Ocean Springs, County and State aforesaid, recollect that, at a meeting of the Board of Supervisors (Police) of said County in the year 1860, there was an ordinance passed granting Antonio Catchot, of the Town of Ocean Springs, a right of property at the foot of Jackson Avenue. It was at that time water; since then made land by the said Antonio Catchot, and known and designated as his oyster shop, the same having a length of sixty feet and a width of fifty feet. We also swear we saw a transcript of said order, which has since been destroyed by fire at the burning of the Courthouse of said county. The above privilege was granted unto said Antonio Catchot for life for services he had rendered the State by saving the life of Captain Charles Walker in the great storm of the same year.

In July 1902, the Town of Ocean Springs filed Civil Suit # 1080 in the Chancery Court of Jackson County, Mississippi. The suit alleged that the defendants: Joe Catchot, Toy Catchot, Mrs. Elizabeth Catchot, Mary Bellande, and Elizabeth Dunn all heirs of the late Antonio Catchot had no valid claim to a parcel of land located at the foot of Jackson Avenue which their father, Antonio, and themselves had possessed for approximately 40 years.

Ocean Springs led by alderman, H. F. Russell (1858-1940), contested the Catchot claim on the following grounds:

*Jackson Avenue was a public street which connected with a public wharf that extended into the Bay of Biloxi several hundred feet to the deep water channel where steamboats and other water craft took on and discharged freight and passengers bound for Ocean Springs and other areas. Jackson Avenue was maintained by the County Board of Police and Supervisors from 1854 until the 16th day of March 1886, when the Legislature created the Town of Ocean Springs. After this date, the city maintained and improved Jackson Avenue as a public street. The city contended that the public right of way did not stop at the waters edge, but extended out the width of the road to the navigable channel connecting the land highway with the public right of navigation in the Bay of Biloxi, a distance of approximately 500 feet at that time. The Town of Ocean Springs also maintained that the County held title to the tract by this same argument until the Town of Ocean Springs was created.*

The Catchot heirs claimed that their father, Antonio, had been given the right to operated an oyster shop in the shallow water of Biloxi Bay about 60 feet from shore by the Board of County Police (now Board of Supervisors) of Jackson County. The only currently known authoritative evidence for a Catchot claim to the property was given during the March Term of 1887 by the Jackson County Board of Police. In Minute Book 2, Page 191, the following statement is found:

*It is ordered that A.J. Catchot be allowed the privilege of building a wharf and house at the foot of Jackson Avenue, at or about the waters edge, so as not to obstruct the passage of persons or vehicles in Ocean Springs Beat Number 4.*

Solicitors for Ocean Springs argued that this right was granted only for the lifetime of Antonio Catchot, and that this condition was forfeited upon his death in 1885. The resultant judgment from the Supreme Court of Mississippi after years of litigation upheld the rights of the heirs of Antonio Catchot to their land at the foot of Jackson Avenue. They also received damages for the destruction of their property by the Town of Ocean Springs.

Joe Tony Catchot continued in his seafood business at the foot of Jackson Avenue in the family tradition. He lost his wharf and oyster shop in the September Storm of 1909. Other beach seafood operators at this time, such as, Narcisse Seymour (1849-1931) were acclimated to the perils of operating on the shore face. Joe Tony continued in the seafood business until his death in 1919.

Before 1920, F. Kuppersmith (d. 1920) from Mobile also operated a large wholesale and retail



fish market on the beach at Jackson Avenue. It is not known if Koppersmith and his son, William Koppersmith (1875-1920+) who succeeded him in 1920, occupied the Catchot site. One of William Kupper-smith's daughters, Gladydis (1904-1941+), married Herman Dick (1897-1941), the son of oyster dealer, Eugene Dick (1868-1918), in January 1926.

In the late 1920s, the Koppersmiths returned to Mobile, and George Davis Maxwell (1888-1951) opened a fish and oyster house on the littoral at Jackson Avenue. A storm struck the area in March 1929, and partially destroyed the Maxwell business.

In the 1930s, Bernard P. "Benny" Seymour (1908-1969), and his wife, Dora, operated a fish house, called the Seymour Brothers, in this area also. It was located where the Sunset Beach Apartments are now situated.

In August 1941, Toy Catchot, the only surviving heir of Antonio Catchot leased the old Catchot oyster house property to Herbert P. Beaugez (1895-1954) for five years. The rental was \$6.00 per month.(JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. Book 85, p. 299)



**Purity Seafood** (post September 1947 Hurricane)  
(located at the foot of Jackson Avenue)

### **Purity Seafood Company**

The Purity Seafood Company was organized by Alfred P. Moran (1897-1967), Hermes F. Gautier (1895-1969), John T. Powers (1887-1971), and Herbert P. Beaugez in October 1942. They operated on the old Catchot grounds under the Beaugez lease agreement with Toy Catchot.

In April 1944, the founders of Purity sold the company to A.W. McAllister and Dudley Lang. After a brief period, the seafood business, still called Purity and leasing the land from Catchot, was conveyed to George Leavenworth (1875-1956) and Edgar P. Guice (1899-1971) in January 1945. In September 1945, Purity acquired the land from Toy Catchot which terminated the Beaugez agreement.(JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. Book 85, p. 298, Bk. 89, p. 239-240, and Bk. 92, p. 226-227)

At this time, Purity Seafood employed about one hundred twenty-five men and women. It owned six boats and had three additional local vessels working for the factory. Depending on the season, the factory processed shrimp, crabs, or oysters. There was a small counter and several tables in the structure where coffee, boiled shrimp, and other seafood served. Edgar P. Guice also owned the Ocean Springs Ice and Coal Company, and Home Ice and Coal at Biloxi.

### **Earl H. Fayard and Ocean Springs Seafood**

In May 1956, Purity then owned by E.P. Guice and Mrs. Virginia Blocker Leavenworth (1912-2006) leased the property to Earl H. Fayard (1929-2007). In February 1962, Purity with E.P. Guice as the sole owner conveyed the site to Earl H. Fayard. Fayard and his family have operated here for almost forty years making Ocean Springs Seafood and Narcisse Seymour & Sons the longest continuous seafood businesses to ever operate in the city.(JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 159, pp. 500-507 and Bk. 85, p. 298)

In April 1976, the Fayard family remodeled their building.(*The Ocean Springs Record*, April 15, 1976, p. 12)





**Ocean Springs Seafood-Foot of Jackson Avenue**  
(l-r: image made July 2005 and September 2005)

In the winter of 1990, it was alleged that Ocean Springs Seafood was not labeling shrimp imported from China. (*The Ocean Springs Record*, February 22, 1990, p. 1)

The foot of Jackson Avenue is the cradle of history at Ocean Springs as evidenced by the Morgan steam packets, the Ocean Springs and Sea Shore Hotels, the Egan wharf, Post Office, store, and barroom, and a long seafood industry occupation from Antonio Catchot to Earl Fayard. Who will write the next chapter seaward of the stately oaks of Jackson Avenue? Unfortunately, it was Hurricane Katrina who slammed into the Mississippi Gulf Coast on the morning of August 29, 2005. A storm surge approaching twenty-feet with waves destroyed the Ocean Springs Seafood building.

### LEWIS & STAPLES

In addition to their mercantile business, Lewis & Staples, were involved in the seafood and wool business. In November 1880, they were shipping an average of 25,000 oysters per day. At Governor Colquit's wedding supper in Atlanta, Georgia, thirty-five gallons of Ocean Springs' finest oysters were served. The succulent mollusks were shipped via Lewis & Staples. (*The Pascagoula Democrat Star*, November 19, 1880, p. 3)

Lewis & Staples was the enterprise of Robert Walker Lewis (1858-1886), the son of Alfred E. Lewis (1812-1885) and Ann Farrington Lewis (1821-1901) of Lewis Sha, now Oldfields, at Gautier and his brother-in-laws, Frederick Staples (1852-1897) and Beauregard Staples (1861-1880+), the sons of Solomon Gordon Staples (1817-pre-1874) and Adeline A. Terrell (1829-1902).

### NARCISSE SEYMOUR & SON

Narcisse Seymour (1849-1931), the son of Jean-Baptiste Seymour and Marie Fournier, established a wharf, oyster houses, and fish houses on the beach and in the water at the foot of Washington Avenue in the 1880s. *The Daily Picayune* of August 22, 1888, corroborates this when describing the destruction of the saloon and fish house of Narcisse Seymour by a fierce storm.



**Narcisse Seymour & Son Oyster Shop**  
(located at the foot of Washington Avenue and Front Beach)

The Seymour seafood operation was on land, which was owned by the Dolbear and Friar



families. Narcisse Seymour must have had a lease or agreement with these clans. This operation was initially called Narcisse Seymour & Son, and lasted in some form until the sea wall was completed in 1929. It is believed that The City of Ocean Springs refused to let the Seymour family or others operate south of the seawall at Washington Avenue.

Narcisse Seymour also owned the trading schooner, *Carrie*, which he would sail to New Orleans. Here he would sell fish, shrimp, turtles, and poultry at the Vieux Carre.

### Family

Narcisse Seymour was married to Amelia Kendall and Virginia Krohn (1847-1895). These women bore him fourteen children, many died young, and others tragically, in their adult lives. The Seymour children that survived adolescence were: Mary Cecile Dick (1869-1953), Hugh Charles Seymour (1876-1913), Rose Harriet Dale (1876-1956), John R. Seymour (1879-1938), Alice Virginia Bellman (1880-1957), Benjamin Seymour (1882-1904), Francis Joseph Seymour (1884-1933), and Carrie S. Ames (1889-1979).

Three of the Seymour boys, Hugh, John, and Frank would join their father in the seafood industry, as well as his son-in-laws, Eugene Dick (1868-1918) and Phillip M. Bellman (1872-1927). Son, Benjamin Seymour, a flagman for the L&N, lost both legs below the knee at Bay St. Louis when he fell beneath a freight train. He died in the Charity Hospital at New Orleans the next day, December 18, 1904. Narcisse Seymour sued the L&N Railroad in 1908, for \$20,000. The jury awarded him \$5,000, but on February 16, 1909, a jury in Federal Court at Biloxi reversed the decision in a retrial.

### Sloop Maud

In mid-June 1897, Narcisse Seymour was building a twenty four-foot sloop to transport seasonal hunting and fishing charters. Occasionally, he sailed to Horn Island on Maud with day trippers. (*The Pascagoula Democrat-Star*, June 16, 1897, p. 3 and June 25, 1897, p. 3)

### 1893 Hurricane

The Cheniere Caminada Storm of 1893 which struck Ocean Springs a severe blow in early October swept away the oyster shop and wharf of the Seymours. The structures were rebuilt immediately and functional by mid-month.

This large hurricane took the lives of at least two Ocean Springs sailors. Calvin Sylvane Ryan (1852-1893) and his son, Edward Wesley Ryan (1875-1893), survived the storm, but died of exposure and thirst on a sand spit on the southwest side of the Chandeleur islands. The schooner, *Alphonsine*, with Captain Paul Cox (1867-1942) at the helm was reported missing, but returned to Ocean Springs safely. Two men who resided in the Bayou Porteaux area, Frank and Paul Fergonise, of the *Young American* lost their lives at the mouth of Grand Pass during the tempest.

In July 1904, *The Progress*, reported that "N. Seymour & Son are on the jump these days in filling their local orders for fish, oysters, crabs, and shrimp. The firm under the management of H.C. Seymour, who is a progressive young man of business faculties and who is always prompt in filling orders is one of the reason of the firm's popularity".

They advertised in 1904 as:

**N. SEYMOURE (sic)**  
**Wholesale and retail dealer in**  
**FISH and OYSTERS Crabs, Shrimp, etc.**  
**CORRESPOND WITH ME**

The firm also owned two shares in the Builders Supply Company, which was incorporated in August 1905. B.F. Joachim (1853-1925) ran the lumber supply company located on Fort Bayou just southwest of the Fort Bayou Bridge.

In 1906, *The Pascagoula Democrat-Star* described Narcisse Seymour as, "*the well known and popular fish, oyster, and shrimp dealer*". He distributed his seafood in a stylish and comfortable



delivery wagon. Narcisse Seymour lived on Dewey Avenue and later on Calhoun. He and his sons had substantial real estate holdings on both streets. In February 1892, Seymour contracted with Westbrook & Buehler to erect two cottages on Calhoun Avenue. One edifice, a Queen Anne Cottage at present day 1108 Calhoun, was the home of his daughter, Carrie Ames, for many years. Mrs. Ames called her home, "Carrie's Happy Hill". This writer gave it the appellation, "Centennial House", because it was constructed in the year that Ocean Springs was incorporated as a town.

Before 1920, Hugh C. Seymour and John R. Seymour with his brother-in-law, D.B. Van Court, commenced their own seafood operations on the beach near Washington Avenue. Another son, Frank Seymour, made his livelihood as a fisherman, and sold his catch to his father and brothers and the seafood factories at Biloxi. The sons of Frank Seymour and Caroline Domning (1887-1969), Bernard and Oscar, would start the Seymour Brothers seafood operation at the foot of Jackson Avenue in the mid 1930s.

Narcisse Seymour died on January 20, 1931, at his daughter's home on Calhoun Avenue. His remains were interred at the Bellande Cemetery.

### THOMAS R. FRIAR

Thomas Randolph Friar (1845-1918) was born at Lumberton, Mississippi on April 14, 1845. He came to Ocean Springs after the Civil War, in which he was wounded at Chickamauga. Friar operated his wholesale seafood shipping business east of the foot of Washington Avenue. He was married to Marie Louise Dolbear (1846-1914), a native of Mobile.

The father of Marie Friar, Louis E. Dolbear (1807-1882), a boat builder and brickyard operator, was born at Genoa, Italy. In August 1866, Mr. Dolbear bought 364 feet on the front beach east and west of Washington Avenue from Azalie LaForce Clay Ryan (1820-1866+), the granddaughter of the Widow LaFontaine, for \$200.(9) On April 12, 1881, shortly before his death, Louis E. Dolbear sold his son, Louis L. Dolbear (1855-1918) and daughter Marie Dolbear Friar, these tracts.(JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 5, pp. 132-133 and Bk. 14, p. 481)

In June 1893, Marie D. Friar bought her brother's eighty-eight front feet east of Washington Avenue consolidating her beachfront interests. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 19, p. 156)

Prior to entering the seafood business, Thomas R. Friar made his livelihood as a carpenter and was the Postmaster of Ocean Springs from 1888 to 1895. The Friars had a large family consisting of: George L. Friar (1870-1924), Thomas Adolph Friar (1871-1896), Louise A. Davis (1874-1952), Robert A. Friar (1878-1948), James Friar (1882-1962), Josephine Friar (1884-1958), and Marie Antoinette Van Court (1886-1978).

In 1900, Robert A. Friar was an oyster dealer probably working with his father. Another son, George L. Friar, became a well known local boat builder and lumber merchant. Thomas R. Friar's daughter, Louise, married Elias S. Davis (1859-1925), who owned the Davis Brothers Store on Washington Avenue while another daughter, Josephine Friar, worked in the Davis Store for many years. Theresa Vahle Friar (1871-1956), the widowed daughter-in-law of Thomas R. Friar, was also an oyster dealer in 1910.

The August 1901 Hurricane wrecked havoc on the beach at Ocean Springs. Wharves, bathhouses, and the entire New Beach Road were destroyed. During the tempest, Captain Thomas R. Friar went to secure his vessel, Gladys. The fury of the storm prevented him from returning alone, and he was rescued by Bob Friar, George Seymour, Ben Dick, and Ned Ladner.

In 1904, Thomas R. Friar advertised in *The Progress* as:

**FRIAR'S OYSTER SHOP**  
Open For The Retail Trade  
**OYSTERS, FISH, CRABS, and SHRIMP**  
*Constantly on Hand*

Your Patronage Solicited Telephone 83 Free Delivery

After Mrs. Marie Dolbear Friar died in September 1914, a forced heirship sale, Jackson County,



Mississippi Chancery Court Cause No. 3462, resulted in her daughter, Josephine Friar, buying Lot 1 and Lot 2 of Block 6 (364 feet on bay front) for \$960. This conveyance occurred in January 1916. Miss Josephine Friar sold her sister, Marie A. Van Court, the east part of Lot 2 (80 feet on the bay) in December 1916.(13) Her husband, Daniel B. Van Court, may have operated his seafood business here before moving to the "triangle" in the 1930s. The triangle is that parcel of ground west of the foot of Washington Avenue. It was formerly the mouth of the small bayou, which drains the Fort Maurepas Nature Preserve, before it was filled in during the seawall construction in 1928-1929. Josephine Friar sold her interest in the triangle to Katherine Crane Powers (1891-1961) in March 1959.(14)

John R. Seymour (1879-1938) would acquire a 100-foot front tract east of the southeast corner of Washington and front beach from O.G. Swetman (1872-1963) in November 1930. (15) He operated his seafood dealership and a restaurant here after the seawall was completed.

### JOSEPH S. CATCHOT

Joseph S. Catchot (1858-1919), called Joe Tony, was the son of Antonio Catchot (1826-1885) and Elizabeth Hoffen (1838-1916). Catchot appears not to have married. He learned the seafood business from his father, an immigrant from Menorca, who probably built the first oyster house prior to the Civil War, at the foot of Jackson Avenue. Joseph Catchot began shipping seafood before 1895. He lost his wharf and oyster shop in the 1909 September Storm. Joe Tony may have been in business with his uncle, Arnaud Catchot (1834-1910).



**Joe Tony Catchot's Oyster Shop** (circa 1910)  
(located at the foot of Jackson Avenue)

Joe Tony Catchot operated in the water and accretions at the foot of Jackson Avenue until his death on June 16, 1919. Frank and William KupperSmith of Mobile took over the site after his demise, probably leasing it from his most likely heirs, Antonio "Toy" Catchot (1868-1954) and Mary Catchot Bellande (1860-1931). The only active seafood operation at Ocean Springs remains here today as The Ocean Springs Seafood Company, which was commenced in May 1956, by Earl Fayard.

### JOHN E. JOHNSON

John E. Johnson (1859-1921), called "Cap", was the son of Norwegian immigrant, Nels Johnson (1814-1895) and German immigrant, Caroline Lunderman (1828-1911). Cap Johnson was born at Biloxi where his father was a prominent boat builder. He went to sea in 1877, piloting a trading schooner into ports from Florida to Texas. Later at Biloxi, he owned the Press Saloon on the front beach between Lameuse Street and Main from 1890 until 1897. Johnson also had a wholesale shipping business in fish, oysters, and shrimp employing sixty men during the seafood season.

In August 1897, Johnson took a lease from Mayor Thomas W. Grayson (1825-1904) of the City of Ocean Springs at the south end of Martin Avenue. The lease granted Johnson the right to operate and conduct "the business of opening, selling or shipping fish, oysters and shrimp, provided the same



shall be conducted in such a manner as to not create a nuisance in said neighborhood". Johnson was required to build ***"a wharf not less than six hundred feet in length from the shore, and not less than five feet wide, to be used by the public in landing and receiving passengers ....erect and maintain bath houses as may be necessary for the accommodation of the public"***.

John Johnson also owned a grocery store on the southeast corner of Jackson and Porter. He bought the property from Peter Geiger (1858-1923) in March 1897. Johnson married Felicia Pons (1868-1910), who was called Ella. They had two sons, John L. Johnson (1885-1917) and Joseph E. Johnson (1886-1887), and a daughter, Mrs. Joseph (Edna) Longinotti (1881-1927), who lived at Hot Springs, Arkansas. Her father-in-law, Joseph Longinotti, Sr. (d. 1923) once was the proprietor of the Hotel Pullman at Hot Springs. Her husband ran hotel when she was murdered in 1927, at Hot Springs. Son, John L. Johnson, also died tragically when he choked to death after leaving Schmidt's Premium Bakery on Washington Avenue.

At the foot of Martin Avenue, Cap Johnson also operated an oyster shucking shed. On February 13, 1899, the mercury fell to one degree Fahrenheit on the Mississippi coast. An announcement was made in *The Biloxi Daily Herald* concerning some of the property loss at Ocean Springs:

***Captain John Johnson was probably the heaviest loser of anyone in town from the cold. A few days previous he had purchased 700 barrels of oysters at fancy prices, all of which froze, entailing a loss of nearly \$800. To make matters worse, orders for oysters have been pouring in all week which cannot be filled.***

This natural disaster probably put Johnson out of business, as he sold the store property to New Orleanian Sidney Anderson (1867-1917) in December 1899, for \$750. Anderson, who owned charcoal schooners and operated a mercantile store at Vancleave, also bought the Artesian House, a small hostel, on the southwest corner of Jackson and Porter in February 1900.

J.E. Johnson moved to Biloxi where he may have gotten in the bar business again. He became ill about 1910, probably with cancer. Cap Johnson died at the home of his sister, Mrs. August Dorries, at 879 East Beach on April 18, 1921. All of the John E. Johnson family members are buried at the Bellande Cemetery on Dewey Avenue.

## 1900-1920

A brief history of some of the contributors to our seafood industry during this time is presented. Others active during this interval: Edward M. Walker (b. 1848), Eugene Dick (1868-1919), Joseph Ladnier (1871-1923), John B. Ryan (1856-1920), John B. Beaugez (1857-1913), Arnold Catchot (1869-1939), and Joseph Ladnier (1871-1923).

### WALLACE H. JAKINS

Wallace Henry Jakins (1873-1929) was born at Islesboro, Waldo County, Maine in May 1873, the son of Henry Jakins (1799-pre-1880) and Elizabeth ? Jakins (1831-1880+), both Maine natives. In 1870, Henry Jakins was a farm laborer.(1870 Waldo County, Maine 1870 and 1880 Federal Census T9-488, p. 15, ED 80 and M593\_560. p. 140)

In 1900, Wallace H. Jakins was domiciled on Warren Street at Mobile, Alabama with George W. Jakins (1863-1900+), his brother. George had just married Cora ?, an Alabama native. Both men made their livelihoods as house painters.(1900 Mobile County, Alabama Federal Census T623 31, p. 16B, ED 103, Ward 6)

At Ocean Springs, Mississippi Wallace H. Jakins married Adele Adelaide Catchot (1895-1981), the daughter of Arnold "Boy" Catchot (1869-1939) and Anna Laura Ryan (1872-1930) in the Methodist Church on May 3, 1909.(JXCO, Ms. MRB 9, p. 63)

Wallace and Adelle were the parents of: George E. Jakins (1909-1977), Marie Jakins Mathieu (1913-2003), Alice Jakins Tanner (1917-2001), Alvin Jakins Sr. (1919-1981), Laura Jakins Dubuison



(1922-1977), Leona Jakins Vaughan (1923-2003+), Janice Jakins Byrd (?-2003+), and Ernest "Buddy" Adelburt Jakins Sr (?-2003+).

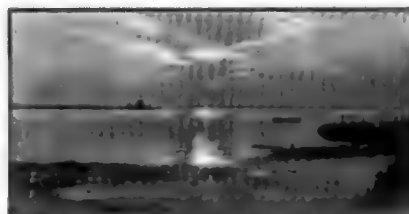
Wallace H. Jakins made his livelihood as a fisherman and operated his own fish shop. He expired at Ocean Springs on October 17, 1929. His corporal remains were passed through St. Alphonsus Catholic Church. (*The Daily Herald*, October 18, 1929, p. 2)

After the demise of her husband, Adele Catchot Jakins married widower, Charles Ernest VanCourt (1885-1984), the son of John Norman VanCourt (1864-1927) and Madeline Pons. Charles E. VanCourt had married Eugenie Beaugez (1888-1931), the daughter of John B. Beaugez (1857-1913) and Euphrosine (Frazine) Catchot (1866-1916), and they had two children: Lilly Mae VanCourt Fayard (b. 1911) and Clifford VanCourt. Adele Catchot Jakins VanCourt expired at Ocean Springs on May 16, 1981. Her remains were interred in the Bellande Cemetery at Ocean Springs, Mississippi. (*The Ocean Springs Record*, May 21, 1981, p. 3)

## FREDERICH A.

### SCHRIEBER

Frederich Adolph Schrieber (1871-1943) was born at Ocean Springs, the son of German immigrants, Adolf Josef Schrieber (1835-1875) and Rosina Christian (1834-1920). He was called "Dolph", and married Lilly Rupp. Her father, Robert Rupp (1857-1930), found the Fort Maurepas cornerstone? in 1909, on the W.B. Schmidt estate where he was the caretaker. In May 1937, Mr. Schrieber through Dr. O.L. Bailey (1870-1938) sent the marker to the Louisiana State Museum at New Orleans. It has never been returned to Ocean Springs!



**"The Shack" at Marsh Point**

This small over-water structure was completed on July 4, 1904, by Frederich A. Schrieber at Marsh Point, the head of Davis Bayou. He called it "The Black Diamond". Here Schrieber had oyster leases and a US Government Land Patent. He lived here intermittently to protect his valuable oyster grounds from poachers. (a George Granitz image circa 1930)

Dolph Schrieber was active in the oyster business as early as March 1902, when he and E.N. Ramsay (1832-1916) and George W. Dale (1872-1953) applied to the Jackson County Board of Supervisors for an oyster planting lease on eighty acres of "land that is underwater" west of Marsh Point. Schrieber built a small home on creosote pilings at Marsh Point. It was christened "The Little Black Diamond" when it was completed on July 4, 1904. Dolph planted over ten thousand barrels of oysters in Davis Bayou opposite his house. He and his wife occasionally lived here to protect their oyster beds from poachers. Mrs. Lily Schrieber reported that she once shot several holes through the skiff of an oyster thief one night. The Schrieber water home became known as the "Shack". It survived storms and hurricanes for many decades, but was probably finished off by Camille in 1969.





**The Schrieber Brothers- Joseph "Dode" L. Schrieber and Adolph "Dolph" F. Schrieber**  
(courtesy of Lurline Schrieber Hall)

Dolph Schrieber acquired a US Government patent on Lot 5, Section 32, T7S-R8W in December 1905.(16) This 23 acres tract adjoined his 1902 oyster leases at Marsh Point. Schrieber sold an interest in his Marsh Point acreage to his brother, Dode Schrieber (1873-1951), and others including, George W. Dale (1872-1953), William Toche (1862-1937), Thomas R. Friar (1845-1918), and John Burr (1875-1916).

In May 1909, Dolph Schrieber relinquished the majority of his holdings at Marsh Point and Grass Island to Hugh C. Seymour (1876-1913). Seymour for \$1000 acquired 1800 feet of Lot 5 fronting on Davis Bayou.(17) This in addition to 800 feet acquired in May 1905, from Schrieber gave Seymour a commanding position on the valuable oyster reefs in Davis Bayou north of Marsh Point.(18)

After his sale to H.C. Seymour, Schrieber left the seafood industry and made a career in the Lighthouse Service. He tended lighthouses at Chandeleur Island, Tchefuncte River at Madisonville, Louisiana, and Biloxi. The Schriebers bought the Hamilton Connor (1855-1929) home on Ward Avenue in the Spring of 1929. He retired from the Lighthouse Service at Biloxi in 1937.

## **WILLIAM EDWARD**

### **WILSON**

William Edward Wilson (1873-1926), called Ed, came to Ocean Springs circa 1906, from Wabash County, Indiana, probably with the L&N Railroad. He married Ida Antonia Fayard Smith (1884-1978) in September 1908.

Although Wilson is better known for his hamburger and hot dog stand and later grocery store on Desoto Avenue, he had a brief period in the seafood business. It seems significant that Wilson located his seafood business on the west side of Washington Avenue between Porter and Bowen and away from the oyster houses traditionally found between Washington and Martin Avenues on the beach. Ed Wilson opened for business in the Bertuccini Building on Washington Avenue in February 1909. He advertised as follows:

**Fresh Fish of all kinds in season**  
**Oyster on the half-shell 10 cents per dozen**  
**Oysters delivered in any quantity to any part of the city**  
**I also carry at all times hot roasted peanuts and popcorn**

The Bertuccini Building may have been what later became the Bertuccini Barber Shop of Jacques Bertuccini (1854-1943). Today, it houses Two Dogs Dancing at 619-A Washington Avenue. From



the local journal, *The Ocean Springs News*, it seems that Wilson discontinued his seafood business at least in the Bertuccini Building. Later that year, Alexander P. Faurie (1865-1930) who came from New Orleans to work for the Davis Brothers, a large mercantile store on Washington Avenue, opened a furniture store in the Bertuccini Building. Faurie later had a dairy business here.

## VAN COURT &

### SEYMOUR

The firm of Van Court & Seymour was formed circa 1914. It was located on the beach at the foot of Washington Avenue. The two proprietors, John R. Seymour (1879-1938) and Daniel Bernard Van Court (1885-1943), were brothers-in-law. Johnny Seymour had married Minerva Aida (Lula) VanCourt (1880-1956). Their children were: Leona M. Seymour (1902-1928), John Edward Seymour (1904-1966), Alfred R. Seymour (1907-1907), Margaret S. Norman (1908-2001), and Mark Seymour (1910-1944).

Daniel B. Van Court was born at New Orleans on April 21, 1886, the son of Alfred Pete Van Court and Virginia Susan Smith. His older brothers, John Norman Van Court and Maurice Kirby Van Court, were in the ice business at Ocean Springs as early as 1900. Van Court was a good athlete and played second base on the local baseball team in 1904.

D.B. Van Court was working as a salesman at the Davis Brothers Store on Washington Avenue, when he married Marie Antoinette Friar (1886-1978) in August 1909. Her sister, Louise Friar (1874-1952), was married to store owner, E.S. Davis (1859-1925).

The Van Court children were: Daniel B. Van Court Jr. (1910-1976), George A. Van Court, Louise A. Van Court (1914-2004), Arnold J. Van Court, and Evelyn M. Van Court. In November 1909, shortly after his marriage, Van Court built a five-room cottage at present day 1313 Bowen Avenue. It was opposite the Emile Domning place. D.B. Van Court later built a home at present day 202 Washington Avenue.

In early February 1915, Van Court & Seymour signed a contract with the L&N Railroad to supply their oysters to the dining cars of one train. Their product quality and service were successful to the point that in October 1915, Van Court & Seymour were awarded the contract to provide all the of L&N dining cars with oysters on-the-half shell and opened oysters during the winter months on a daily basis. The L&N found the oysters of Van Court & Seymour vastly superior to other suppliers. A sample menu card was printed and displayed at the L&N depot which read, "Oysters served in this car received fresh daily at Ocean Springs, Mississippi".

The Hurricane of September 29, 1915, which struck the Mississippi coast destroyed the oyster packing shed of the firm leaving only a few posts standing. Tons of oyster shell were washed ashore by heavy wave action resulting in piles of shells along the beach front.

By 1916, Van Court & Seymour were the leaders in wholesale shipping of raw oysters and shrimp at Ocean Springs. Their seafood operation, which consisted primarily of oyster sheds, a wharf, and several motor fishing boats, the *Seavan* and the *Vansea*, was located on the beach at the foot of Washington Avenue. The firm shipped by railway express, utilizing iced cars, to Louisiana, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, and New York.

Many of the local families such as, Benezue, Cox, Ryan, and Catchot were employed by the firm to catch shrimp, fish, turtles, and tong oysters. Oyster sold for \$1.00 per sack. Large shucked oysters called plants sold for \$.50 per hundred while selects or small oysters brought \$.25 per hundred. Speckled trout, flounder, and red fish went to market for \$.25 per pound, crabs \$.20 per dozen, and Marsh Point sea turtles returned \$40 per dozen at New York City.

The seafood partnership dissolved after a few years with Van Court and Seymour going their separate ways. Van Court later operated his seafood business on the Josephine Friar property in the "triangle", west of the foot of Washington Avenue. Seymour remained on the front beach at the foot of Washington Avenue until the seawall construction in 1928-1929, forced him out.

Daniel B. Van Court was named a deputy seafood inspector for the Mississippi Seafood Commission in 1934. He served as Ward 3 alderman in 1921-1922. He expired on October 10, 1943.



**HUGH C.****SEYMOUR**

Hugh Charles Seymour (1876-1913) was married to Clara Tillman (1889-1952), a native of St. Elmo, Alabama. Her mother Mary J. Tillman Gallotte, married John F. Tillman in 1887. Other children: Almeda T. Byrd and James Tillman. Their children were: Hugh C. Seymour, Jr. (1908-2004), Foster N. Seymour (1909-1999), Ulysses Seymour (1911-2000), and Mary Nell Seymour (1912-1915).

Hugh Seymour learned the seafood business from his father, Narcisse Seymour, on the beach at Ocean Springs. He was the manager of Narcisse Seymour & Son in 1904. In April 1903, he bought the beach front lot just west of Washington Avenue with 274' fronting on the Bay of Biloxi from Dr. O.L. Bailey (1870-1938) for \$2000.(19) L.L. Dolbear formerly owned the property. The deed from Bailey gave Seymour all riparian and oyster rights. Dr. J.J. Bland (1850-1932) operated his Beach Hotel to the west, and Hugh Seymour made an agreement with Dr. Bland concerning riparian right boundaries in January 1909.(20)

In 1905 and 1909, Hugh Seymour purchased over 2500 front feet of land on Grass Island (Marsh Point) in Lot 5, Section 32, T7S-R8W from F.A. Schrieber (1871-1944).(21,22) Valuable oyster beds were located in the waters of Davis Bayou north of Grass Island. Thomas R. Friar and George L. Friar were also active in this area.

In July 1908, Hugh Seymour purchased a 15.36 acres tract of land in the SW/4 of Section 18, T7S-R8W in the St. Martin area north of Fort Bayou from E.N. Ramsay (1832-1916).

(23)

He built a home here on what is now North Washington Avenue and Seymour Lane. Seymour died at his beachfront home in May 1913, before moving into his new home. The old Seymour St. Martin home was demolished in 1990, when North Washington Avenue was widened.

Hugh C. Seymour was active in the business and social affairs of the community. He was a director of the Ocean Springs State Bank, and a member of the Biloxi Council No. 1244 KC, Biloxi Elks Lodge No. 606, and Ocean Springs Fire Company.

In 1915, the widow, Mrs. Clara Seymour, leased her oyster grounds to A.P. "Tony" Kotzum. Kotzum owned the Eagle Point Oyster Company. Phillip Bellman (1872-1927) took over Hugh Seymour's beach front location, and ran his seafood operation here until 1923. Mrs. Seymour sold the beachfront property to George Leavenworth in 1927, for \$7500.(24) The old Seymour house remained vacant for many years and is believed to have been destroyed in the 1947 Hurricane.

**PHILLIP M.****BELLMAN**

Phillip M. Bellman (1872-1927) was the son of Charles Bellman Jr. (1841-1885) and Almira Egan (1851-1881). His grandfather, Charles Bellman (1806-1860+), was a German immigrant who arrived at Biloxi in 1835. Here, he married Pauline Ryan (1815-1899) and made his livelihood as a boarding house proprietor, druggist, and doctor. Charles Bellman, Jr. made his livelihood as a carpenter and was residing at Ocean Springs probably on Jackson Avenue in 1870.





**Philip M. Bellman (1872-1927)**

Phillip Bellman married Alice Seymour (1880-1957), the sister of John and Hugh Seymour, and the daughter of Narcisse Seymour (1849-1931) and Caroline V. Krohn (1847-1895). Their children were: Bertridg B. Brou (1900-1992) married Edward Brou (1896-1949); Phyllis B. Burke (1902-1970) married Edward Burke; Inez B. McClain (1906-2004) married Arthur R. McClain (1900-1974); Carrie B. Dellinger Emerson (1909-1964) married Earl J. Dellinger (1901-1951) and Milton Emerson; Bernice B. Cascio (1912-1971) married Charles Cascio 1909-1968); Philip A. Bellman (1915-1964); Edward Bellman (b. 1920) married Mabel B. "Patty" Kennedy; and Robert E. Bellman (b. 1927) married Thelma Rita DeGeorge. (Lepre, 2001, pp. 102-103)

Phillip Bellman worked with Narcisse Seymour & Sons until 1915, when he joined A.P. "Tony" Kotzum (1871-1916) in forming the Eagle Point Oyster Company. After Kotzum died in 1916, he took over the Hugh C. Seymour (1876-1913) oyster shop on front beach west of Washington Avenue. Bellman was noted for his affable humor and relaxed attitude.

In mid-December 1916, two of Bellman's fishermen, Alphonse Cox and Emile Beaugez (1901-1967), took his vessel, Kentucky, in search of shrimp outside of Dog Key. The motor quit and they rigged a crude sail to get home. The resourceful seamen reached Belle Fontaine Beach and walked ten miles back to Ocean Spring having been without food for nearly two days.

In August 1923, Philip M. Bellman sold a two-thirds interest in the Ocean Springs Fish and Oyster Company to C.L. Martin and S.J. DeBleau who planned to continue the business at the same site and under the same lease terms from Mrs. Hugh C. Seymour. Bellman vended his business to Martin and DeBleau for \$600. (*The Jackson County Times*, September 15, 1923, p. 5)

The Bellman family moved to Biloxi in 1923, and resided at 612 Reynoir Street. Phillip Bellman made his livelihood as a carpenter until he passed away on March 3, 1927, at Biloxi.

### **THERESA VAHLE FRIAR**

To my knowledge, Theresa Vahle Friar (1871-1956) was the only woman oyster dealer at Ocean Springs. She was the wife of Thomas A. Friar (1871-1896), the son of oyster and fish retailer, Thomas R. Friar (1845-1918). Theresa V. Friar was born at New Orleans, the daughter of Franz Vahle (1838-1894) and Catherine Vahle (1838-1914). Her ancestry was Swiss-German. Both families spoke the German language.

Mrs. Friar's husband, Thomas A. Friar, died untimely at Pensacola, Florida on November 10, 1896, of typhoid fever. He left two small children: Lydia Louise Hewson (1895-1968) and Adolph C. Friar (1897-circa 1971).

After the death of her husband, Theresa V. Friar assisted her mother in operating the Vahle House, a two-story family hotel, which was situated on the northwest corner of Washington and Calhoun. It



was opposite the Shanahan House, another family operated hostel. In 1904, her brother, Casper Vahle (1869-1922), ran a small ice house on Washington Avenue just north of the Vahle House with James Soden. Casper Vahle was formerly in the livery business with Jeff Davis Egan (1864-1907). Herman Nill (1863-1904) was the brother-in-law of Theresa and Casper. He owned a drug store on northwest corner of Porter and Washington.

In the 1910 US Census, Theresa Vahle lists her occupation as an oyster dealer. She probably operated out of her father-in-law's Washington Avenue oyster shop. Mrs. Friar moved to St. Leo, Florida several years after the Vahle House burned in 1916. She returned to Ocean Springs in 1930. Mrs. Friar resided in a small green cottage on the former site of Vahle House. She died on August 18, 1956.

## THE OCEAN SPRINGS PACKING

### COMPANY

Although the first seafood canning factories were established at Biloxi as early as 1880, it would be several decades later before one was built at Ocean Springs. As early as 1883, it was mentioned in local journals that Ocean Springs needed a canning plant. In August 1883, *The Pascagoula Democrat-Star*, related that *"plenty of fresh shrimps caught by the Seymour brothers and crew. Why can't our own town start a canning factory"*.

In February 1897, *The Pascagoula-Democrat Star* announced that *"a movement is a foot to establish a canning factory on the beach"*.

*The Biloxi Daily Herald* reported in February 1899, that local real estate, insurance, and businessman, H.F. Russell, authorized the town council of Ocean Springs to offer a twenty-five year lease for a cannery site. (*The Biloxi Daily Herald*, February 5, 1899, p. 8)

In October 1904, a reporter for *The Progress*, the local journal, wrote:

*A well known gentleman of New Orleans who visits this city quite often remarked to the writer the other day that "Ocean Springs ought to have a canning factory". We are more glad to hear assurances from other cities that such an institution would pay here. Every citizen in this city thinks so too, and we, with their cooperation, are going to keep pegging away until we get a factory here. A canning factory is one of the things Ocean Springs needs and must have to make it the city it should be.*

### Gorenflo Island

Although Ocean Springs would eventually get a cannery, The Gulf Coast Fisheries Company constructed a plant on Gorenflo Island (now Big Island) in April 1906. Gorenflo Island encompasses 103 acres and is located in the Bay of Biloxi about one mile southwest of Fort Point, the western terminus of Ocean Springs. William F. Gorenflo (1844-1932), a native of Bay St. Louis, who pioneered the seafood industry at Biloxi bought the island from Robert Lowery who governed Mississippi from 1882-1890 for \$103 or \$1 per acre. ( )

Gorenflo feared that a local tax of \$.05 per barrel was going to be levied on shrimp by the Harrison County government. Since the island was then located in Jackson County, his factory would be exempt from the tax. It is believed that Gorenflo never had to exercise his threat to move his Back Bay Biloxi cannery to Gorenflo Island.

In April 1906, Nichols & Castanera laid the foundation and floor sills for the **Gulf Coast Fisheries Company**. The plant was built to process menhaden and non-commercial fish, i.e. gars, catfish, and sharks. The resultant products were fish oil and fish meal which had a high ammonia content and in demand as a constituent of fertilizer.

Unfortunately, the plant became an environmental disaster. The atmosphere in the vicinity of the operation was contaminated with the malodorous scent of rotting fish. The cooking method used to process the fetid fish also contributed heavily to the local air pollution. In addition, the waters of the bay were contaminated with a caustic yellow scum by-product reported to have the capability of removing paint from boats, which came into contact with it. Needless to say, the plant created a stir



among the residents of Biloxi. After some legal action ensued in 1908, the factory's activities diminished and it was slowly phased out. The Hurricane of 1909 and subsequent storms destroyed the physical plant.

(see "Charter For New Cannery", *The Biloxi Daily Herald*, November 20, 1905, p. 1)

### Ice and shrimp

Although located further east than the Gorenflo Island menhaden operation, Ocean Springs did get a seafood factory in early 1915, when Louis A. Lundy (1876-1941), Morris McClure (1884-1940), and Joe Zaehring opened a cannery near the L&N Railroad Bridge. Prior to this time, the seafood business at Ocean Springs consisted primarily of shipping raw oyster by rail. The oyster dealers were located on the front beach principally at the foot of Jackson and Washington Avenues. Some of the people engaged in the oyster trade were: Antonio Catchot (1826-1885), Joseph Catchot (1856-1919), Narcisse Seymour (1849-1931), Thomas R. Friar (1845-1918), Theresa Vahle Friar (1871-1956), Anton P. Kotzum (1871-1916), Philip Bellman (1872-1927), Hugh C. Seymour (1876-1913), John R. Seymour (1879-1938), and Daniel B. VanCourt (1885-1943).

The Lundy family was from Mobile, Alabama, and had come to Ocean Springs circa 1889. William Lundy (1827-1880), the father, had been born in Mississippi. He went to Mobile as a young man and made his livelihood as a clerk in a dry goods store. At Mobile, he met and married Margaret ? (1835 1900+), a native of Alabama. Together they reared four children at Mobile. They were: Corrine L. McClure (1854-1930), Helen L. Horton (1854-1890), Franklin J. Lundy (1863-1912), and Louis A. Lundy (1876-1941).

Why the Lundys moved to Ocean Springs is unknown, but the family was an asset to the city. Franklin Jefferson, called F.J., and Louis Alexander known as L.A. were an integral part of the business community. As early as 1892, F.J. Lundy was a merchant operating a general store on the southeast corner of Washington and Government Street. He was successful in commerce and acquired substantial real estate holdings at Ocean Springs and environs including the Ocean Springs Hotel.

### Louis A. Lundy

Louis A. "L.A." Lundy (1876-1941) was a teenager when his family moved here from Mobile. He married Alberta May Wattleworth (1885-1962) at the Jesuit Church of New Orleans on March 26, 1906. Her sister, Gertrude Wattleworth (d. 1971), married L. Morris McClure, the nephew of L.A. Lundy. McClure would serve as Mayor (1933) and Postmaster of Ocean Springs (1915-1925) and (1934-1940). The Wattleworths' father was English and their mother a Louisiana native probably born at New Orleans. At this stage of his career, Lundy was the cashier in the branch of the Scranton State Bank at Ocean Springs. Prior to this he ran the Postal Telegraph Company for brother, F.J. Lundy.

The L.A. Lundy home was located on southeast corner of Washington Avenue at Iberville near the Marble Springs. Their neighbors were the Garrards, Lemons, Hodges, Friars, and Dr. H.B. Powell. Five Lundy children were born at Ocean Springs, but only three survived to adulthood. They were: a girl who died at birth (born circa 1907); L.A. Lundy, Jr. (1908-circa 1993); John (born circa 1910) who died young; F.J. Lundy (born circa 1912); and Katherine Lundy Howland (born circa 1914).

Among other commercial ventures, it is believed that L.A. Lundy held a seat on the New Orleans Cotton Exchange with H.F. Russell, and owned interests in seafood factories at Biloxi, Bayou La Batre, Alabama, and Westwego, Louisiana. It is possible that he owned the Shanahan Hotel at Washington and Calhoun in its later years.

After L.A. Lundy sold the factory to E.W. Illing, Jr. he practically retired from the business community in which he had been extremely active. It is believed he enjoyed his later years socializing with his many friends in the Ocean Springs area.

On June 4, 1941, L.A. Lundy died at Ocean Springs. After his demise, May Lundy moved to New Orleans and lived there until her passing in April 1962. They are both interred at the Metairie Cemetery.

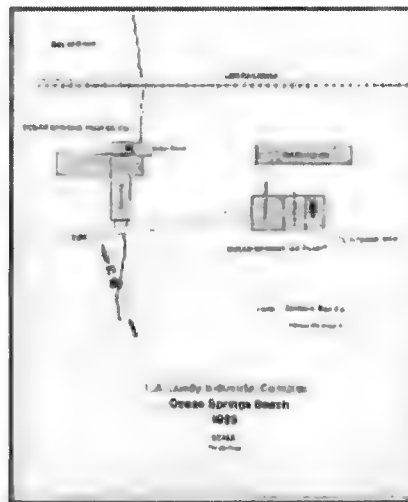


## Ocean Springs Packing Company



**Ocean Springs Packing Company**

The seafood factory, known as the Ocean Springs Packing Company, was located one hundred twenty-five feet west of the ice plant on the four-acre Lundy tract. In 1925, it consisted of a 3600 square-foot building on pilings about eleven feet above the water. A 2000 square-foot warehouse was located just east of the factory.



**Ocean Springs Seafood Site Plan (1925)**

The city government of Ocean Springs granted the privilege of erecting a cannery near the ice factory to L.M. McClure and L.A. Lundy on December 8, 1914. The Ocean Springs Packing Company opened for business in early March 1915. The original plant cost \$2500, and was financed with local capital. It had a 60-75 barrel capacity. The owners stated that it would keep \$8.50 in Ocean Springs for each barrel of shrimp canned. Otherwise, that money would have gone to Biloxi canners. When fully operational, Lundy's cannery would have the capacity to process vegetables for canning. (*The Ocean Springs News*, March 18, 1915, p. 2)

## Opposition

The commencement of a seafood operation on the beach at Ocean Springs was not without some controversy. Mayor W.T. Ames (1880-1969) and the Ocean Springs Board of Alderman had given Lundy and McClure the authority to build their cannery in December 1914. As word of this action reached the citizenry, immediate opposition was raised by some of the beach estate landowners. A petition was circulated and presented to the city government by General Marshall Miller, a prominent New Orleans attorney. Their salient objections to the shrimp factory were that it would be a nuisance because of the bad odors, ruin the residential nature of the bay front, and it wasn't needed because of the number of canneries at Biloxi.

Several prominent citizens spoke out against the venture. Horticulturist and pecan orchardist, Theodore Bechtel (1863-1931), was against the factory because he felt the class of the imported labor



to work in the facility might be a detriment to the community. Mrs. Annie L. Benjamin (1848-1938) of Milwaukee, a winter resident at Shore Acres, her large estate dominating Fort Point, complained that a cannery would be a menace to the beauty and purity of the town. Dr. O.L. Bailey (1870-1938), local physician, said that ***"if it does prove to be a nuisance and is a public menace, it will be suppressed, if sanitary measures prove unavailing"***.

Robert Dunbar Wigginton (1874-1958+), a local attorney, representing the Ocean Springs Packing Company defended the construction of the cannery by pointing out that the petition represented only a few beach residents. He added that Ocean Springs could use the payroll and that the shrimp season was rather short. Also in defense of the factory, John W. Lunday (1867-1953), the manager of the Ocean Springs Packing Company said:

***"I cannot understand why all this opposition was raised. Our plant will only be of about 60 barrel capacity--the Biloxi concerns which are said to give off bad odors are of 1000 barrel capacity. More over, the smell comes from the shrimp boats, lying at the wharf. Boats cannot lie at our wharf, because they would obstruct the channel."***

Mr. Lunday went on to add that the operation would commence in February 1915. He expected a labor force of about three hundred none of which would be Bohemian. Lunday, a native of Shubuta, Mississippi had managed the Lopez-Dukate factory at Neptune, Louisiana. His wife was Emma Wells.

### **First canned shipment**

Syracuse, New York was the recipient of the first shipment of Ocean Springs' canned shrimp. Thirty-five cases arrived there at the end of June 1915. L.A. Lundy in negotiating trade agreements in the North had given Ocean Springs an abundance of publicity. At this time, the factory was bolstering the local economy by five to eight thousand dollars a year through its payroll.

The Ocean Springs Packing Company was not affected by the 1915 fisherman's strike, which caused financial distress along the Mississippi coast. The union pay scale was in effect and the payroll for the season was expected to be \$10,000.

In early October 1915, high tides and ninety mile per hour winds from a Category 4 Hurricane, which struck the southeastern Louisiana coast, reached Ocean Springs. Among the casualties of this tempest was the Ocean Springs Canning Company. *The Ocean Springs News* reported on October 7, 1915 the following:

***The shrimp factory fell with a crash, at about eleven o'clock Wednesday night that could be heard above the howl of the wind. It is a most absolute wreck. Boilers, kettles, cappers, and engines are huddled together at the water's edge, and not two pieces of planking have been left nailed together. The beach is strewn with cases of canned shrimp and empty cans.***(p. 1, c. 1).

Manager J.W. Lunday reported that the cannery was covered by insurance for \$2000, and that the operation would be functioning again in about three weeks. The new structure was ready by early November 1915. It was three times the size and had about twice the capacity of the original plant. The factory was also built four feet higher placing it about eleven feet above mean tide.

By 1917, Lundy had a large addition built onto the existing warehouse. He also planned to can okra and sweet potatoes at the facility in the offseason. C.E. Schmidt in **Ocean Springs French Beachhead** (1972) had this to say about seafood factories:

***here (Ocean Springs) we had only one, and it limped along 25 years before it died, unnoticed and unwanted. It was located on the beach by the ice factory and under the management of the same Louis A. Lundy. Seafood processing was never welcomed on the Ocean Springs side of the Bay, and is not, even to this day.***



**1917 Fire**

The factory caught fire in late February. A hole was burned in the engine and boiler room. (*The Daily Herald, February 27, 1917, p. 3*)

**Speculation**

Indications that the Ocean Springs Packing Company was doing well and possibly considering another cannery site on Back Bay in the St. Martin Community, were manifested in June 1923, when the company took a twenty-five year lease from Paul and Adele Fountain on a 1.8-acre tract known as the west half of the Francis Fountain homestead. The site was located in Section 16, T7S-R9W. It does not appear that the Fountain land was ever utilized as a factory by the Lundy group.

**Biloxi move**

At some time prior to the 1927-1928 shrimp season, the Ocean Springs Packing Company moved to Biloxi where they entered into a lease agreement with the Elmer Packing Company, probably the Elmer-Spotswood Packing Company, which was situated on Back Bay and Lee Street. L.A. Lundy and Joseph Zaehring left Ocean Springs because there was a paucity of labor to efficiently run their Ocean Springs cannery. In late January 1928, the Ocean Springs Packing Company suffered a major loss at its Biloxi operation as more than 1700 hundred cases of canned shrimp were destroyed by a fire at the cannery. Lundy and Zaehring planned to commence canning operations at Ocean Springs immediately. (*The Jackson County Times, February 4, 1928, p. 1*)

**Gulf City Caning Company**

In 1934, E.W. Illing Jr. made a request to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of Ocean Springs to commence a seafood and vegetable canning operation. Total value of land and plant equipment was given at \$7740. (Town of Ocean Springs Minute Book 1-1-1929 to 11-6-1934)

In 1934, E.W. Illing, Jr. (1895-1978) took over the Lundy factory and changed the name of the business to the Gulf City Packing Company. The plant commenced operations on September 18, 1934 with sixty people employed to pick shrimp. It had the most modern equipment and sanitary conditions of any factory on the Mississippi coast.

Bert O. Gunn, Sr. of Biloxi was vice president and manager of the plant. He had eighteen years of experience in the seafood industry. Sixteen years were with the Seafood Company of Biloxi and two at Gulfport, where Illing also had a plant.

During the shrimp season, Illing employed about one hundred people and approximately eighty in the period of the oyster harvest. The annual payroll amounted to about \$8000, which went into the local economy. The Gulf City Packing Company was still operating in 1936.

By 1940, it is believed that all canning activity had ceased at the installation. With the demise of Monsieurs Lundy and McClure in the early 1940s, Mrs. Lundy took control of the cannery acreage.

**Ice and shrimp**

Between November 1898 and April 1900, C.W. Ziegler, W.B. Schmidt, and A.A. Maginnis Jr. conveyed their interest in the Dr. Joseph B. Walker place to A.G. Tebo and spouse, Jesse R. Tebo, for \$1700. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 20, pp. 9-10, Bk. 21, pp. 332-333, and Bk. 21, pp. 394-395)

In March 1902, the Tebo family sold the Walker place to J.W. Stewart (1855-1918), a Moss Point druggist, who held it for a short while, before vending it to Sydney J. Anderson (1867-1917) and Louis A. Lundy (1876-1941) for \$4500, in May 1902. Messrs. Anderson and Lundy, both from New Orleans, organized the Ocean Springs Electric Light and Ice Company, which acquired the Walker tract from them in March 1903. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 24, p. 440, Bk. 25, pp. 514-515, and Bk. 26, pp. 143-144)

Hence, the old Joseph B. Walker domicile gave way to progress and circa 1903, an ice plant was erected. In August 1904, *The Progress*, the local journal, reported "*the ice factory is running day and night with full force, on account of the large increase in the demand for ice. Nearly all the ice boats which go to the Louisiana Marsh are now taking ice at the factory wharf. This is indeed*



**good news to the citizens as well as the factory owners".** (*The Progress*, August 27, 1904, p. 4)

The ice plant primarily served the thriving seafood industry. In September 1927, it was sold to Edgar P. Guice (1899-1971). Guice was operating his Ocean Springs Ice & Coal Company on Jackson Avenue at this time.

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### **L.G. Moore**

L.G. Moore of Biloxi leased the plant in January 1941, from E.W. Illing. The County dredge deepened the channel to the plant in order to facilitate the unloading of shrimp and oysters at the plant's wharf. No further information. (*The Daily Herald*, January 27, 1941, p. 8)

### **Commercial leases**

Through the years the Lundy family had made other commercial leases on this valuable tract, which fronted over 400 feet on highway US 90, near the Ocean Springs-Biloxi Bridge. Some of the lessees through the years were: Joseph J. Kersanac (1938-1943), Charles Hendry (1940), Pete Lowry (1950-1952), James M. Swanzy, Jr. (1952), and Paul Allman (1954-1979).

### **Kersanac's**

In 1939, Joseph J. Kersanac (1908-1943), a native of Bay St. Louis, opened a restaurant called Kersanac's Snug Harbor. He also sold Texaco gas and oil. On April 1, 1939, Kersanac announced that he was demolishing the present building **"to make room for a new, larger and more modern one"**. The food serving operation never shut down as Kersanac offered "curb service" during construction of the his new structure. The new building was wood framed and had living quarters on the second floor. (*The Jackson County Times*, April 1, 1939 and *The Daily Herald*, August 23, 1943, p. 6)

### **Pete's Lounge**

Leland "Pete" Lowery (d. 1955), a native of Grenada, Mississippi, came to Ocean Springs with his family from Gulfport after WW II. They had earlier resided in the Delta region of northwest Mississippi. As early as July 1947, Mr. Lowery was operating Dale's Place in the former J.J. O'Keefe Home situated on the northeast corner of Porter and Jackson. (Donnie L. Beaugez, August 1998 and *The Jackson County Times*, July 26, 1947)

It appears that Pete Lowery left Dale's Place in early 1949, and moved across the street to the Neville Byrd property situated on the northwest corner of Porter and Jackson. Here he commenced a business called Pete's Lounge. Lowery's place featured nightly dining and dancing with music by Toby Gunn on the Hammond organ and the Dixie Land Band. Adam "Frenchie" Bourgeois (1914-1987), the bar tender, later opened his West Porter establishment, Frenchie's Fine Foods. Lowery also



had a drive-inn restaurant with curb service. A barbecue pit was located near the Cosper Courts, now Dale Cottages. The Lowery family also resided here as there were two apartments on the site. (*The Jackson County Times*, June 10, 1949 and July 1, 1949, p. 10 and Donnie L. Beaugez, August 1998)

In late September 1950, Leland "Pete" Lowery left this location and opened a Pete's Lounge on Highway 90 on the west side of the War Memorial Bridge in the former Kersanac's Snug Harbor building of J.J. Kersanac. Pete Lowery made significant improvements to the property. The exterior and interior of the structure was repainted, the rear of the building was excavated to create a circular driveway and space for patron curb service, and adequate rest room facilities were installed. Local artist, Charles Kuper, painted jungle scenes in the Cocktail Lounge. Jo Selzer of New Orleans was hostess. (*The Gulf Coast Times*, September 22, 1950, p. 1)

In relocating to Highway 90, Pete Lowery had taken a four-year lease from Mrs. May W. Lundy (1885-1951+). (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 124, pp. 394-396)

In January 1951, Pete Lowery suffered a heart attack, and spent several months recovering. It appears that he may have decided to retire from the restaurant business as in October 1951, Pete Lowery sub-leased the property known as Pete's Lounge to Edwin L. Matheny (1920-1987). Mr. Matheny took an option to buy Lowery's equipment and fixtures in Mrs. Lundy's building. (*The Gulf Coast Times*, January 19, 1951, p. 1 and JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 124, pp. 397-400)

It is known that Pete Lowery went back into the lounge business as he was operating Pete's Lounge in West Biloxi in December 1953. (*The Gulf Coast Times*, December 10, 1953, p. 1)

### **Allman's Restaurant**

In October 1954, Paul W. Allman (1917-2000), a native of Eldon, Iowa, and former Morrison's Cafeteria manager, opened Allman's Dining Room in the building, which formerly housed the Sea Breeze, a lounge, on the highway. Allman's eatery prospered by maintaining high quality food, providing excellent service, and utilizing modern innovations like air conditioning. Allman's was the first air-conditioned restaurant in Jackson County.

In September 1961, Paul and Arlene Inga Allman bought the 4.41-acre Lundy triangular tract situated between the L&N Railroad right-of-way and US Highway 90 with a 336 frontage on Biloxi Bay. They erected a new building after Hurricane Camille had destroyed the old Kersanac building of 1939. The new restaurant became known as Allman's Restaurant and Lounge. In May 1979, the Allman family sold their tract and eatery to Jeanette Dees Weill, the widow of Adrian Weill (1903-1971), a Biloxi realtor. The consideration was \$240,000. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 649, p. 450)

### **Jeanette D. Weill**

In the May 1979 acquisition, Jeanette Dees Weill (1916-2002), a native of Alabama, also acquired the use of the name Allman's Restaurant and Lounge. In December 1986, Jacqueline W. Bernstein, Jolene W. Aultman, and Donna W. Green, Conservators and daughters of Jeanette D. Weill, sold the former Allman tract to Loris C. Bridges. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 649, p. 454 and Bk. 875, p. 475 and p. 478)

### **Loris C. Bridges**

Loris C. Bridges, a former Jackson, Mississippi real estate developer and land speculator, aspired to build a marina on her bay front lot. She had owned and operated the Gulf Hills resort from August 1981 until January 1983. In May 1987, her company, Bridgeport, Inc., acquired a twenty-five year lease from Jackson County, Mississippi on the old US Highway 90 Bridge, which was completed in 1929 and replaced by the present span, which opened for traffic in May 1962. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 887, p. 352)

Unfortunately, Mrs. Bridges failed to complete her marina and the Weill family reacquired their property in a trustee sale executed by Sanford R. Steckler, a Biloxi attorney, in April 1989. (JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 936, p. 120 and p. 124)

### **Weill Heirs Inc.**



In February 1993, David A. Wheeler, as Guardian Ad Litem of Jeanette D. Weill, conveyed the Weill property to Weill Heirs, Inc.(JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 1012, p. 209)

### **Loris C. Bridges**

In October 1994, Loris Cayce Bridges acquired a lease from Weill Heirs, Inc.. Jolene W. Aultman, president and Donna Weill, secretary. The old Allman's Restaurant building was utilized as the office for Bridgeport Marina, a project thought still viable by Mrs. Bridges. Again Mrs. Bridges failed to attract investors and her proposed marina project was never commenced.(JXCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk. 1051, p. 628)

### **Grand Marina**

In the summer of 2004, investors again are speculating that a marina can be situated on the former 19th Century home site of the Reverend Joseph B. Walker. Grand Marina, a project consisting of 120-unit condo, restaurant, and marina to accommodate 400 vessels, is now in the offing. The old Allman's Restaurant building was also demolished in the summer of 2004, in the anticipation of new construction.(*The Bay Press*, October 22, 2004, p. 10)

Written history needs life experiences to give it reality and perspective. In order to inject some feeling for the seafood industry and life during the Great Depression at Ocean Springs, Lurline Schrieber Hall has generously submitted an essay, which is very germane to the subject. The following article was composed by Mrs. Hall in April 1988. Thanks Lurline, for again contributing to the knowledge of our local history.

### **"BODY AND SOUL FOOD"**

by

**LURLINE SCHRIEBER HALL**

"To keep body and soul together" is an old saying oft repeated by our elders yet seldom taken seriously by the younger generation. During the Depression of the thirties, we struggled to keep body and soul together as hunger and disaster threatened daily. Many people survived on bread lines but my family existed on such expensive delicacies as oysters, fish, shrimp and crabs. They were not delicacies to us--just body and soul food.

My father was a carpenter but work was scarce and one cannot eat sawdust. Many people in our town obtained their living from the waters of the Mississippi Sound. My dad fished, oystered and caught shrimp as a hobby. He only went out with his boat when he did not have any carpentry work to do. When there was money to be made, there was no time for the delights of the Gulf of Mexico or Biloxi Bay.



**Oyster crates** (images made 1922)

These oyster shipping crates were constructed by Joseph "Dode" L. Schrieber at his home on 27 East Porter, now 1309 Porter. The J.L. Schrieber home here was demolished in July 2003. Courtesy of Lurline Schrieber Hall, the young lady in the photographs.



There were two ways for us to get seafood. We could go out on the bay and get it or we could wait for a string of mullet or flounder, a basket of crabs, or a bucket of shrimp to appear quite mysteriously at our back door. We seldom saw these offerings arrive but my parents usually knew who brought them as they knew who owed money for the manufacture of boats, oyster tongs and oyster knives, or stools to sit on while opening oysters. Many times the fishermen could not pay cash for the work done but some mornings you would open the back door and find a dozen mullet, strung on a green marsh grass thong, hanging on the door knob. In season, you would find oysters (winter) crabs and shrimp (summer) and fish (year around). When we wondered about these gifts, Mama would say that was Daddy's pay for work done. How she managed the bookkeeping is a puzzle. But the fishermen were honest and paid, one way or another. We could not spend the payment but we could avoid hunger for ourselves and some of the neighbors with whom we shared our windfall, or was that waterfall?

The other way, which was the best way, was to go for it ourselves and this was my favorite pastime. To go out on the boat with Daddy was a little bit of Heaven. Everything about a trip was disagreeable in a way and yet it was the highlight of my young life. The first unpleasant thing was getting up at four a.m. in summer, five in winter. I hated to get up, hated the clock for its punctual alarming and hated Daddy (for about a half second) for calling me to "Come along" if I intended to go. One mind told me to go while the other favored snuggling under the covers and sleeping until noon. Usually the first mind won and Daddy and I struck out for the Mill Dam Bayou (now the Inner Harbor) with our equipment loaded on the wheelbarrow.

We had to walk about five blocks and arrived at the bayou ready to board our boat and head through the winding stream out to the bay. One morning, with Daddy in the bow and me at the tiller, I went blank and forgot which way to turn right or left and drove us straight into the bank. Daddy asked me what I was thinking about but did not chide me. I was allowed to continue as helmsman.

When we were out for mullet we chose a short, narrow inlet, which branched off from the bayou and watched for a school of fish ahead of us. When we spotted some silver beauties jumping and frolicking in front of the boat, Daddy stood on the bow of the boat, a portion of the cast net grasped in each hand and one lead held in his mouth. He threw the net over the school of fish usually catching enough for our dinner at the first throw. He said it was a good thing he did not wear dentures as he would lose them on the first throw. The next throw was for the neighbors and with a good catch we headed for home. Sometimes we had to try other inlets before we found the fish and I was glad of anything that prolonged our trip.

Another day we would try for shrimp. It takes a different type of net with smaller mesh to catch shrimp. Daddy made his own nets, knitting them in the kitchen by the wood stove in winter. He made his own leads also, pouring hot lead into a mold out in his shop. When we were after shrimp, we went out past the mouth of the bayou and into the bay. We would keep our eyes peeled for the little rascals jumping high in glee as they navigated the salt waters of East beach. It took more than two throws to catch the elusive shrimp but what a picture to see my father throw that brail net making it land in a perfect circle and draw it in loaded with the bounty of the sea.

There was one thing I did not like about shrimping and that was not shrimping. That would come about when we had just thrown our anchor overboard and started to watch for a school of shrimp. Out on the bay a large shrimp boat would appear, making for the factory, loaded to the gunnels. The crew had been out on the other side of the islands for several days and were headed to port with an excellent catch. Suddenly one of the men aboard her would recognize Daddy and begin to call us. I would suggest that daddy not answer him. But he would call again and I would plead. Daddy would insist that he must answer; it would be rude to ignore them. Then they would instruct us to pull along side their boat. I knew what that meant--the end of our shrimping. No more throwing the perfect circle and hauling in the wriggling shrimp with a few small crabs and shining minnows mixed in with them. We would pull alongside, displeasure showing on my face. The fishermen generously poured shrimp into our boat. I would look away in disgust; my morning was ruined.



Generally they poured until Daddy held up his hand---enough. He thanked them with "much obliged", but I only frowned. When they pulled away from us, we got underway for the Mill Dam and I grumbled although I knew we would get home earlier than we planned and daddy might have some work to do in the shop. Anyway, it never paid to be rude.

And then it was winter and the treasure we sought was oysters. The night before the proposed trek, Daddy went out and scanned the sky, casting his weather eye about. According to what he saw, we planned. Instead of a net, we took oyster tongs, long-handled rakes fastened together with a bolt so that they opened and closed freely. We planted oysters every year to insure continuous crops on our private grounds off East Beach. We dared not put out markers because of poachers but took a sighting on shore and on the Ocean Springs-Biloxi Bridge. We got up early; we always went early which I did not understand. What did it matter what time we went? The oysters did not have clocks!

When we began to tong for oysters we hoped no one saw us as they might take note of the spot and rob us later. There was nothing we could do about it because there was no way to hide on the open water. Daddy worked the tongs-open and closed, pen and closed, and listened for the sound of shells below. Soon he would bring up clusters of shells commonly called reef. Each empty shell we had planted earlier had produced many full ones. After we had estimated to be a barrow load, we pulled up the anchor and made for the familiar bayou.

Arriving at the Mill Dam bridge, we would load the oysters on our wheelbarrow and roll them home. Parking the barrow behind the house where no sunlight would hit it, we covered the oysters with wet burlap sacks. Oysters will remain alive and fresh for about two weeks. We could have some to eat whenever we liked and Daddy would open them upon request.

Crabbing was accomplished by my friends and me without the aid of adults. We rose at five a.m. (always early) and walked to the beach. We gathered our crab bait (chicken necks and hog backbone) and a ball of twine the day before. With a net on a long handle, we vowed to bring back the makings of gumbo and stuffed crabs. There were usually four or five of us and we walked to Front Beach and went out on a wharf---anyone's wharf, as the owners seldom used them early in the morning. Another reason for going early, we tied our bait to pieces of string which were long enough to reach about two feet down under the water and sat down to wait for the crabs to begin to dine. When a string became taut, you knew you had a bite. One of us grabbed the crab net by the handle and eased the net end into the water several feet away from the string so as not to frighten the crab, while another one of us began to pull the string about an inch at a time, finger over finger, slowly bringing the bait up to the surface with the crab clinging to it. It was necessary to move slowly with the bait string but fast with the net, which was maneuvered under the bait and pulled upward. The crabs were seldom missed although some smart ones evaded us. They were dumped from the net into a bushel basket and covered with a wet burlap bag and the bait was throw back for the next unsuspecting critter. When we each had about three dozen of the flavorful crustaceans in our baskets we were ready to leave the beach. We counted this a rewarding day.

The sun was high in the sky by this time and we dreaded the walk home, which had been short that morning, but now seemed endless. We picked up our baskets, helping each other by sharing the loads. Perspiration ran down our faces and necks and we took off our straw sun hats from time to time to fan ourselves as we stopped to rest for a few seconds. We remarked repeatedly to each other about how hot it was and then bragged a little about our catch. As we trudged along, warmly uncomfortable, I suddenly understood why Daddy always insisted on going so early in the morning on our quest for body and soul food. To beat the heat!

With this wonderful anecdotal history completed, lets return to the chronology of our seafood history in the 1900-1920 era.

### DEVITT & CLARK

Shortly after the Ocean Springs Packing Company began operating in 1915, another small cannery was also opened here by Biloxi businessmen, in late August 1915. It was called Devitt & Clark. The company was incorporated at New Orleans on June 10, 1914. Devitt & Clark commenced operations in the canning business on Point Cadet at Biloxi, in August 1913, when it leased the plant of the



Bourdon-Castanera Packing Company for the 1913-1914 shrimp and oyster season. Devitt took the interest of Louis Harvey (1874-1913). Their cannery, which was modern and well-equipped, was situated between the Dunbar, Lopez & Dukate factory and the Barataria Canning Company. (*The Daily Herald, August 26, 1913, p. 8*)

In October 1914, Devitt and Clark purchased the cannery of Walter A. White. The officers of Devitt & Clark were Thomas Kirkland Devitt (1882-1946), president; Charles C. Redding (1857-1926), vice president; and Patrick Henry Clark (1870-1927), secretary-treasurer. Charles W. Mackie, Jr. was on the board of directors of the firm.

At the time Devitt & Clark commenced operations at Ocean Springs, the fishermen, who belonged to the local association of the International Longshoremen Union, were on strike. Devitt & Clark got seventy barrels of shrimp to process in mid-September 1915, from non-union fishermen. Independent fishermen were also supplying the Ocean Springs Packing Company. Some of the large canneries at Biloxi were also receiving small amounts of shrimp. Devitt & Clark had the schooner, Charles Redding Jr., working at harvesting shrimp. It planned to put more boats to work in the winter. Presently, the physical location of the Devitt & Clark cannery at Ocean Springs is unknown.

T.K. Devitt was born at Harbor Springs, Michigan. He resided at Biloxi. In August 1907, Devitt married Lily Rose Bourdon (1884-1951), the daughter of French immigrant, A.O. Bourdon, Sr. (1845-1901), and Marie Virgets (1847-1901) of New Orleans. The Devitts resided on lower Lameuse Street. Here they reared their three children: Thomas K. Devitt Jr., Matthew Devitt (Slidell, Louisiana), and Lily Stuart (Baltimore).

Before opening Devitt & Clark at Ocean Springs, T.K. Devitt was in the grocery business at Biloxi. Initially, he worked with John Mosley. By 1913, he was the local agent for the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, operating a grocery business on Howard Avenue.

Charles C. Redding (1857-1926) was born at Bay St. Louis. He was also a grocer at Biloxi. Redding parlayed his entrepreneurial skills in many areas of commerce and was particularly successful in banking and the cannery industry. He once was president of the Biloxi Canning Company.

Patrick Henry Clark (1870-1927) was born at New Orleans of Irish immigrant parentage. He was married to Leonie B. Clark (1876-1940). In 1910, Clark was the manager of a canning company. P.H. Clark appears also to have been involved with Joseph Lamm (1874-1911) in the L&N Bakery and Confectionery on Howard Avenue. Lamb was married to his sister, Katherine (1876-1944). The Clarks resided on Cuevas Street with their three children: Lillian, Patrick, and Joseph. Mrs. Clark later resided on Bohn Street. P.H. Clarke died in October 1927. His remains were interred at the Biloxi Cemetery.

The fate of Devitt & Clark at Ocean Springs is not clear. It appears to have been a short lived venture, and may have been a victim of the 1915 Hurricane which devastated its competitor, the Ocean Springs Packing Company. L.A. Lundy rebuilt that enterprise. Devitt & Clark probably did not.

In June 1919, T.K. Devitt was president of the American Packing Company when it was sold to Grego Antisich, P.H. Clark, Peter Skermetta, Luka Kuljis, and Marko Skermetta. This cannery was located at Point Cadet, and the conveyance included the schooners, *Marvel*, *Henry Clark*, *Lily Rose*, and *Ocean Queen*.

Circa 1926, T.K. Devitt became active in the seafood industry at Louisiana. He was involved in packing operations at Braithwaite, Wyclosky, Golden Meadow, and Cutoff. He sons were also in the seafood business at Louisiana. Clark expired at New Orleans. His remain were interred the Biloxi Cemetery.

## DR. CHARLES ALBERT

### BABENDREER

Dr. Charles Albert Babendreer (1867-1938), called Albert, was a physician who retired to Ocean Springs circa 1909. He probably came here from Kentucky with his wife, Dr. Estelle Turner Babendreer (1871-1958), and children Eleanor B. Moore (1901-1984+) and Eric T. Babendreer



(1903-1975).

Dr. Estelle Babendreer (sometimes spelled Babendrier) attended Plute Medical College and practiced medicine at Kentucky. At Ocean Springs, she specialized in skin disorders and allergies. Dr. Babendreer's clinic was in her home, "Pinewood", at present day 601 Pine Hills Road. They acquired thirty acres in this area in January 1907, from F.M. Weed (1850-1926) and E.S. Davis (1859-1925).

The Babendrier children became attorneys. They practiced at Ocean Springs commencing in 1929. At the time, Eleanor Babendreer, was one of few women in this field in the state. Both children left Mississippi. Eleanor married Walter D. Moore of Florence, Alabama, and Eric went to Memphis, Tennessee.

Although long retired from the practice of medicine, Dr. Albert Babendreer continued his life in an entrepreneurial role. In 1917, at the age of fifty, Dr. Albert Babendreer was involved as the proprietor of the Whole Grain Wheat Company at Momence, Illinois. It was a cereal manufacturing plant. Elias S. Davis, the owner of E.S. Davis & Sons, a local mercantile business, was a director of the company.

In October 1919, Albert Babendreer entered the seafood industry at Biloxi. He purchased the Biloxi Canning Company, which was located at Reynoir Street and the Back Bay of Biloxi for \$4000. At the time, Babendreer was president of Maritime Food Products Company, an Illinois corporation. (HARCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk.125, p. 73)

Growing up in Baltimore, Maryland on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, Dr. Babendreer was surely influenced by the thriving seafood industry there. It was from Baltimore that Biloxi businessmen, operating as The Lopez, Elmer & Company, bought the equipment and learned the technology to open the first cannery there in 1881. Baltimore also provided Biloxi with a transient labor force. These seafood workers were called Bohemians, although primarily of Polish origin. Circa 1884, Lopez, Elmer & Company became the Biloxi Canning Company.

In 1920, Dr. Babendreer entered into an enterprise, the machine and foundry business, which was complimentary to his cannery. The business, called The Biloxi Machine Works & Foundry Company, was also located at Biloxi on the northeast corner of Railroad Street and Magnolia. The company manufactured the Gulf Standard Gasoline engine, gray iron, and made brass and aluminum castings. Louis Braun served as vice president and J.R. McElroy was the treasurer of the organization.

In May 1924, Dr. Babendreer sold the Biloxi Canning Company to Bernard Taltavull (1882-1948) for \$10,000. (HARCO, Ms. Land Deed Bk.142, p. 129)

When Dr. Albert Babendreer died on June 19, 1938, he was buried in a mausoleum like structure located southwest of his home. This feature may have been used originally as a cyclone cellar. For more information on the Babendreer family, the reader is referred to two articles written in this column on October 6 and October 13, 1994.

## FRANK

### KUPPERSMITH

Frank Kuppersmith (1859-1920), an Alabama native, came to Ocean Springs from Mobile, Alabama. In September 1916, he leased the Eagle Point Oyster Company building on Front Beach. It had been operated by Anton P. "Tony" Kotzum (1871-1916), the son of Joseph Kotzum (1842-1915). (*The Jackson County Times*, September 23, 1916)

In May 1920, Mr. Kuppersmith advertised his business as follows:

#### **Retail Fish, Oysters, and Crabs**

Located on the Beach Jackson Avenue.

*Always Open*

**F. Kuppersmith**

(*The Jackson County Times*, May 22, 1920, p. 5)

It appears from Federal Census data that F. Kuppersmith was the son of Anthony Koppersmith



(1831-1880+), a Prussian engineer, who settled at Mobile. F. Kuppersmith died February 19, 1920, at Ocean Springs. His remains were sent to Mobile for internment. Mr. Kuppersmith was respected in the Mobile business community where he had a wholesale seafood enterprise vending oysters, fish, and produce. (*The Jackson County Times, February 21, 1920, p. 5*)

William Kuppersmith (1875-1920+), the son of F. Kuppersmith, continued the seafood business at Ocean Springs, for a few years after the death of his father. He was born at Mobile and married to Lina Kuppersmith (1880-1920+). They had four children: William Kuppersmith (1901-1980), Gladys K. Dick (1904-1990), Godfrey Kuppersmith (1910-1980), and Marie Kuppersmith (b. 1911).

### **George H. Dick**

In January 1926, Gladys Kuppersmith (1904-1990) married Herman George Dick (1896-1941) of Ocean Springs, the son of Benedict Dick (1869-1904) and Louise Zeolide Seymour (1875-1903). They had three children. The Dick family moved to Ohio and Illinois, where he worked for the Western Union. G.H. Dick was killed in a railroad accident at Witt, Illinois on September 27, 1941. He was buried in Mobile, Alabama. (*The Daily Herald, January 13, 1926, p. 3* and *The Jackson County Times, October 11, 1941, p. 1*)

The William Kuppersmith family moved back to Mobile in the mid-1920s, and George Davis Maxwell (1881-1951) took over their Jackson Avenue business site.

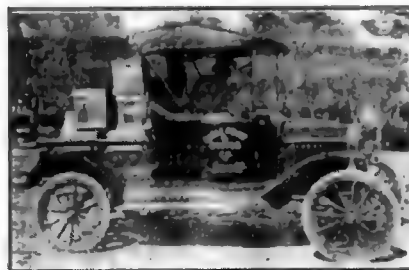
### **A.P. KOTZUM**

Anton P. Kotzum (1871-1916) was the son of Joseph Kotzum (1842-1915), a Bohemian immigrant who came to the United States in 1866. The elder Kotzum made his livelihood at Ocean Springs originally as a blacksmith, but later accumulated substantial real estate holdings throughout the city.

Anton, called Tony, was born in Louisiana, and followed his father into the blacksmith trade. He joined a young Canadian immigrant, Orey A. Young (1868-1938) to establish Young & Kotzum who in 1893, advertised as:

***Machinists and plumbers, horseshoeing and general blacksmithing, repairing of all kinds, makers of fine oyster knives.***

In October 1895, Kotzum married Julia C. North. They had two children: Joseph and Alice Kotzum. In June 1897, the young couple were residing at Lutchet, Louisiana. (*The Pascagoula Democrat-Star, June 25, 1897, p. 3*)



**Eagle Point Oyster Company** (image made 1915)

This vintage 1915 image depicts a Model T Ford delivery vehicle operated by the Eagle Point Oyster Company of Anton P. Kotzum (1871-1916) and Philip Bellman (1872-1927). Their fine oysters were harvested at Marsh Point, at the head of Davis Bayou, from the Schrieber-Seymour oyster grounds. Clara T. Seymour, the widow of Hugh C. Seymour (1876-1913), leased her oyster beds to the Eagle Point Oyster Company in November 1915. Note the oyster crates in the truck bed.

In 1898, Tony Kotzum moved his family to Alameda, California. In September 1915, Kotzum returned to Ocean Springs after his father's demise. He became involved in land trading and rental



property. In October 1915, as manager, he joined Phillip Bellman (1872-1927) to found the Eagle Point Oyster Company.

Kotzum was also a fine musician and directed the Ocean Springs Concert Band, an outgrowth of the Ocean Springs Brass Band led by T.J. Ames. He crusaded for more benches in Marshall Park. Kotzum felt that the spectacle of a hundred or more ladies standing during his concert was a poor advertisement of civic pride.

In November 1915, Tony Kotzum entered into a lease agreement with Clara T. Seymour (1889-1952), the widow of Hugh C. Seymour, on the oyster beds and grounds and house located at Marsh Point. This was the property that Hugh Seymour had purchased from F.A. Schrieber. Schrieber had built a house over the water and lived there periodically to protect his oysters from poachers.

Anton Kotzum agreed to pay the widow Seymour \$250 per year and *"carefully cultivate and attend the oyster beds and grounds so manage the beds that they will be in good physical condition at the expiration of this lease as they are at present and to return all shells removed from the grounds properly spread or their equivalent in steam shells"*.

The Eagle Point Oyster Company advertised their product as, *"our oysters are unsurpassed for flavor and excellence, being grown from original stock, on grounds long noted for their superior qualities"*.

Tony Kotzum died in September 1916. Mrs. Kotzum remarried a Mr. Bryan. Their son, Joseph F. Kotzum, was living at Fresno, California in 1925, where he may have been a telegraph operator.

## 1920-1940

### GEORGE DAVIS

#### MAXWELL

George Davis Maxwell (1888-1951) was born at Pachuta, Mississippi on September 6, 1888. The Maxwells moved to Ocean Springs circa 1895. His mother, Cynthia Davis Maxwell (1869-1951), the daughter of George W. Davis (1842-1914) and Margaret Bradford (1846-1920), was widowed from C.E. Maxwell circa 1894. She married Albert C. Gottsche (1873-1949) in September 1896.

George D. Maxwell probably took a lease from the Catchot family and operated on the old Joe Tony Catchot-Kuppersmith site at the foot of Jackson Avenue. In February 1924, Maxwell advertised in *The Jackson County Times* as follows:

#### OYSTER & FISH MARKET

*Ring Telephone 165 for Oysters, fish, bait. Shop located at the foot of Jackson Avenue. Place a standing order. We deliver to all parts of the city. Twice daily. First delivery 9 a.m.-second, 4 p.m. G.D. Maxwell.*

In early March 1929, the Maxwell oyster and fish house was struck by a storm and partially destroyed. It is believed that Mr. Maxwell closed his seafood business and went to work at the Gottsche Thrifty-Nifty on Washington Avenue shortly after this natural disaster. (*The Daily Herald*, March 16, 1929, p. 2)

George D. Maxwell was married to Floi Porter of Mobile. Their children were: Wallace Maxwell, Rozier Maxwell, Sidney Maxwell, Ellie M. Klein, and Mary Maxwell.

#### The Seawall

The construction of the seawall at Ocean Springs had a profound effect on the shoreface from Plummer's Point to East Beach. A \$600,000 bond election was held in June 1927. Ocean Springs voted 206 for and 24 against the project. In February 1928, the Miller-Hutchinson Company of Lake Charles, Louisiana commenced work on the seawall. When the work was completed in March 1929, the new beach drive was the best-lighted part of town. Miller-Hutchinson moved to New Orleans where they built the Bonnet Carre Spillway at Norco.



After the seawall was completed in 1929, the old Seymour-Friar oyster shops at the foot of Washington Avenue ceased to exist. Several of the descendants of Narcisse Seymour continued in the seafood business for about another decade inside of the seawall perimeter.

## SEYMOUR

### BROTHERS

The Seymour Brothers, a seafood retail-wholesale business was founded by Bernard "Bennie" P. Seymour (1908-1969) and Oscar L. Seymour (1912-1964) in 1935, at foot of Jackson Avenue, where the Sunset Beach Apartments rest today. They were the sons of Francis J. Seymour (1884-1933) and Caroline Domning (1887-1969). Their father was a fisherman and their grandfather, Narcisse Seymour, was a pioneer seafood operator at Ocean Springs.



**Seymour Brothers Seafood Shop**

(l-r, Benny Seymour and Oscar Seymour-image by Frank Neuenfield-April 1935)

Bernard Seymour married Theodora "Dora" Smith (1910-1978) on June 3, 1939 at New Orleans. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Smith who resided at 1418 Spain Street. Bennie and Dora Seymour lived at 18 Dewey Avenue. They had no children. She married Joseph C. Wieder (1905-1990) after the death Bennie Seymour.

Oscar L. Seymour lived on Dewey Avenue until May 1944, when he moved his family to the Veillon Cottage (erected circa 1924) at present day 300 Ward Avenue. Mrs. Naomi Fields operates a quaint bed and breakfast establishment, called the Magnolia House, here today. Oscar Seymour was married to Evelyn Ramsay (1915-1974) in January 1935. Their children were: Frank R. Seymour (1942-1966), Anne Marie Williams, Martha Evelyn Herren, and Wanda Mary Krohn.

In March 1935, the Seymour Brothers advertised in *The Jackson County Times* as:

Phone 71

Seymour Bros. Bennie and Oscar  
*Raw Oysters, Fish, Shrimp, Crabs, Live Bait*  
**PROMPT DELIVERY**  
 Foot of Jackson Avenue  
 Residence Phone 14

### GRACE SEYMOUR CRAB PLANT

Mrs. Grace Renes Seymour (1900-1961) was a native of Bay St. Louis, and the daughter of Joseph Renes. She came to Ocean Springs circa 1909, and was married to John J. Seymour (1899-1962). Mrs. Seymour resided at present day 1102 Dewey Avenue where she reared a large family. She primarily operated a stuffed crab business, which began circa 1931.

The Seymours had a small building in their rear yard, which served as a picking shed. Mr. Seymour boiled the tasty crustaceans and brought them to the ladies who picked the succulent meat. At any given time, Mrs. Grace might have as many as eight crab pickers employed. She did all the cooking and seasoning which in addition to the fresh crabmeat were the secrets to the success of her product.

In addition to local deliveries and selling her crabs at the L&N depot, customers would come from Biloxi and neighboring towns to purchase Mrs. Seymours delicacies. As a young lad, I remember the Friday morning drive from Biloxi to Dewey Avenue with my father to get stuffed crabs for dinner, as we called lunch.



Upon retirement age in the late 1950s, Mrs. Grace Seymour sold the business to her son and daughter-in-law, John and Lydia Seymour.

### **J&L SEAFOOD**

John H. Seymour (1923-1991) and Lydia Beaugez Seymour bought the business of his parents, John J. and Grace Seymour in 1957, and changed the name to J&L Seafood, utilizing the letter of the first name of each, John and Lydia. Mr. Seymour caught crabs in Biloxi Bay and at Pass Christian. He also purchased them from other fishermen for about \$.10 per pound to supply the business.



**The "Ronbeck"**

The "Ronbeck", a small motorized skiff was used by J.H. Seymour to crab in the Bay of Biloxi. The vessel was named for his two youngest children, Ronny and Becky Seymour. Note the crab traps on the stern of the boat. Courtesy of Keri Bruening-Henfing, granddaughter of John H. Seymour and Lydia B. Seymour.

The crabs were boiled and picked by seven to eight women primarily from Biloxi. The stuffed crabs were made up on Thursday evenings for delivery to restaurants, large hotels for conventions, grocery markets, and individual pick ups. They sold for \$3.00 per dozen retail.

J&L Seafood advertised in *The Ocean Springs News* of February 20, 1958 as follows:

**Visit**  
**J&L SEAFOOD MARKET**  
**for**  
**ALL KINDS OF SEAFOOD**  
*for your Lenten Menu's*  
**Oysters Shrimp Fish of all Kinds Specializing in .....**  
**\*Stuffed Crabs \*Stuffed Flounders**  
**J&L Seafood Market 56 Dewey Avenue**  
**Dial TR 5-7190**

### **Family history**

On July 30, 2005, Keri Bruening-Henfing, granddaughter of John and Lydia B. Seymour provided this history of J&L Seafood. It was provided to her by their children.

*John Seymour, Grace's son, wasn't old enough to help catch the crabs when the business was started. Instead, he was volunteered to sell the stuffed crabs at the Ocean Springs Depot. The year was 1932 and the only sleep this youngster could get was the kind he found on mailbags in between the stopping of trains. Because of this, he had to drop out of 4<sup>th</sup> grade as it was interfering with his ability to help support his family.*

*When his mother was ready to retire, John and his wife Lydia Beaugez formed J&L seafood and bought the rights to the secret family recipe. They worked hard and built up a business with the help of seven children.*

(see *The Ocean Springs News*, 11-14-1957, p. 1)



In 1969, Hurricane Camille dealt the business a crushing blow when Mr. Seymour lost over two hundred crab traps at Pass Christian. The L&N Railroad hired him to ferry workers to inspect and repair their damaged bridge across the Bay of Biloxi. Seymour then accepted a position as bridge tender with the railroad.

Today, the last vestiges of the seafood industry on the waterfront at Ocean Springs are the Ocean Springs Seafood Company operated by the Earl H. Fayard family at the foot of Jackson Avenue, and a few shrimp trawlers moored at the Inner Harbor. The present Fayard operation developed from the Purity Seafood factory erected in 1942, on the old Antonio Catchot accretions at the foot of Jackson Avenue, the cradle of the seafood industry at Ocean Springs.

## JOHN BEAUGEZ FISH

### MARKET

Situated on VanCleave Avenue, now Russell.

#### ***NOW Fresh***

Oysters-Fish-Shrimp-Every Day

**JOHN BEAUGEZ FISH MARKET**

On VanCleave Avenue

Around the corner from Steelman's Grocery

**LET US SERVE YOU**

*(The Gulf Coast Times, December 22, 1950, p. 7)*

## WEST SEAFOOD

Located on Russell Avenue near Government Street. Mrs. West was the mother of Earl Fayard. *(The Ocean Springs News, March 13, 1958, p. 1)*

### Epilogue

For many years, the waters of the Mississippi Sound and Biloxi Bay provided a livelihood for many local families. Two men, Antonio Catchot (1828-1885) and Narcisse Seymour (1849-1931), their heirs, and descendants were the primary figures in the small oyster, shrimp, and fish business, which existed on the shoreline of Biloxi Bay at Ocean Springs from the L&N Railroad bridge to Washington Avenue. Compared to the large canneries, shipyards, and fishing fleet, which existed at Biloxi, the seafood industry at Ocean Springs was minuscule. The fact that it was our ancestors who toiled and provided for their families from the sea should be enough to remember and preserve what remains of this integral part of our heritage.

I hope these articles have brought some nostalgia, been educational, and possibly inspirational. If I have omitted someone or you would like to contribute to this chronology in anyway, please let me know. I would like to know more about our seafood industry history and the people who lived it!

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Edward  
Anthony  
A.P.

J.A.  
Albert

Frank  
Gordon L. Jr.

Perley J.  
Louis B.

Marshall L.

700

700

Edward B.

G. L. Jr.

Frank J.

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Frank A.

Frank

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Frank

Frank

Frank

Callie Goff

A. Grace Parker

Gertrude A. Daniel

Agnes A. L. Stewart

Mildred Mellanby

Catherine Mason

Lucile Barnes

Grace Johnson

Abae M. Davis

Margaret A. Brannon

Rebecca Stone

James Lee Pope

Edith L. Tanner

Emmett A. Shubert

Robert W. Rogers

James T. H. H.

James Irene Shubert

Frank P. Dyer

Robert M. Taylor

Robert M. Taylor

Robert M. Taylor

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Robert M. Taylor



Cushman J. D.  
 Cusminsky H. K.  
 Cushman Artie  
 Courleau H. D. Jr.  
 Cumpey Roy C.  
 Cutchut Anthony A.  
 Carter Lewis  
 Corington John Jr.  
 Crane Leslie  
 Cientat E. E.  
 Corington P. J.  
 Cameron Allen E. Jr.  
 Canfield Mark B.  
 Clark George O.  
 Chapman R. R.  
 Cale M. M.  
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 Conroy W. A.  
 Cousins P. H.  
 Clark C. B. Jr.  
 Crenshaw Marion  
 Crawford C. A.  
 Patchett Adelbert F.  
 Conroy J. J.  
 Chappelle L. O.  
 Cox O. J.  
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Over the Commence-  
at Whitworth Col-  
y. 21st inst.

college girls are pre-  
commencement sea-  
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**Ills. Courier Journal**  
Administration of justice  
divided between the  
and the mob.

**TY has acted nobly  
for Mr. M. M. Evans  
State, and our peo-  
ple appreciate it.**

of the most distin-  
of Vicksburg have  
for failure to ob-  
to practice their

Brazier, who were killing Mr. Philpott time ago, surrenders in Clarke county, the 11th inst.

the Lowry organs  
Perry yet? Break  
ly to Bro. Frantz.  
my silver threads  
now.

**MAN MONEY**, of this  
in Washington  
to publish the Na-  
in the interest  
with the Post-

and that the running  
passenger trains on  
this railroad will  
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bed, which the road  
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is connection with

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ly remarks that "there is as good gubernatorial timber outside of the Executive mansion as there is in it."

HON. H. S. VAN EATON delivered the annual address at the commencement exercises of the Gillsburg Collegiate Institute, at Gillsburg, Miss., last Thursday.

MACON, MISS., was visited by another damaging fire last Monday morning. Loss about eighty thousand dollars, insurance fifty thousand. Unfortunate town.

Gov. LOWRY has refused to pardon Moriarty, of Yazoo county, who was convicted of the murder of Col. Ricks. We score one white mark for "Dear Bob."

MR. O. E. MAER has purchased the interest of his partner, Mr. D. R. Ferris, in the Columbus Dispatch. Mr. Maer is a thorough-going newspaper manager, and we heartily wish him abundant success in the solo management of the Dispatch.

MR. A. CATCHOT, of the firm of A. Catchot & Sons, of Ocean Springs, died in that place last Wednesday after a protracted and painful illness. Mr. Catchot was 70 years of age and was one of the oldest citizens of Ocean Springs, where he has been living for thirty or forty years.

A SNAKE nine feet long and say-  
n inches in diameter was killed  
near Starucco, Pa., a few days ago.  
The animal had a peculiar flat head  
and about its neck was a circle of  
short stiff hairs. Its color was  
brown, with red bands around the  
body at intervals of a few inches.  
Killing it was an easy matter as it  
was helpless from gorging when  
discovered, being in the act of de-  
vouring a newly-born lamb, which  
it had almost half-swallowed.

The Tupelo Journal thus remarks on the present situation of Gov. Lowry: "They are getting extremely close to 'Dear Bob' with those aggravating 'specific charges,' and it is just possible that he may find it necessary to go before the people in his vindication, or have the curtain rung down on his career of ineptitudes."

Rev. A. A. LOMAX WENT  
Vaughan's Station by request, and  
held services near that place  
Sunday. While returning from the  
church the horse became frighten  
ed, caused by some part of the  
harness breaking, and started to  
run. Mr. Lomax, in attempting to  
jump from the buggy, had his leg  
broken just above the ankle.

THE Secretary of the Treasury has issued a warrant for \$15,000 to S. H. Buck, Director-General of the New Orleans Exposition, and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, at the head of the women's department of said Exposition. The money is to be used exclusively in payment of claims against the women's department for which purpose it was appropriated at the last session of Congress.

A MATHEMATICAL genius has ascertained that if all the people of the world were brought together at Boston and stretched along the railroad track they would only extend as far as New York. To accomplish this he bunches them together at the rate of three to the square yard, and allows them to extend a half mile on either side of the track.

THE editor of the New York Tribune is now sojourning on the Pacific coast. He was interviewed the other day by a San Francisco Chronicle reporter. Of course he talked about journalism. We quote from the Chronicle: "The mainstay of all newspapers," he said, "is the Truth. In the seeking of this, and when found, even at the bottom of the well, it should be guarded with a boldness that knows no fear and a courage that knows no surrender."

Dr. WIRT JOHNSON, secretary of the Mississippi Board of Health, says, in a private letter, that the Board will watch the health reports of New Orleans, and upon the first information of yellow fever in that city, will establish quarantine stations at the State line on all routes leading out of that city into the State, by rail and river. We hope the Board will not be too hasty and cross the bridge before they get to it. Quarantine is an evil to be avoided as long as possible, and to be applied judiciously and sparingly.

twenty-one years ago at which he followed Stephen their the youngest soldier that commanded a corps, how the student of this college and leader of the men who then followed him in battle to peaceful anti-trial pursuits, thus literally the sword into the plowshare.

For those newspaper men who  
 pired to office and missed, we ha  
 of consolation. It is this: Any  
 hold office, but it takes a mighty  
 a man to run a newspaper witho  
 the wolf always squat at his doo  
 it of capacity, if not of dollars  
 and an easy time.—*Aberdeen Wee*  
 And there's the rub. It

such a condition of affairs originates so much editorial wood. It takes solidifying to stem a hard current.

CAPT. E. O. SYKES, reappointed Collector of Internal Revenue for this State, tendered his resignation a few days since, for the reason that, in the investigation, he discovered that a proper discharge of the duties of the office would require his absence from home and private affairs, which he does not consider justified by the circumstances. This is much to be regretted as a man is lost to the service really; unfortunate that business men who are so much wanted at home are so hard to get in the public service, and such characters are most to be desired. There are plenty, however, who can leave home for office without the least inconvenience.

WE are in receipt of a number of the *Lantern*, weekly published at Jackson, edited by H. C. Fairman. Its political mission is to advocate principles rather than the cause of a man, and is in favor of reform to begin with. We welcome the *Lantern*, and judging of vigorous beginnings we expect good results from its in the present state of political affairs.

Col. Muldrew, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Department, won golden opinions from all people there. His Indian office. His model official, kind and attentive, in touches business with a charm and capability that drew

Pasc: Democrat-Star



Charles Grune and wife, Julius and wife, Chas. Falkenheimer, and wife, New and wife, Miss Almore Sheriff, ix children and idmann, Mobile.

Pascagoula presentment that is beauty. Under is attractions are out riding with. Ma Murphy and claims that the companionship of a foretaste of men, and try it ben know how

**COMPANY.**

riced Attractions ere.

ry company of engagement at day night to a npany is by far at has ever ap- round" comedi- equals, and his ertaining never in an uproar of y, the ventrilo- at his act was wonderful jug- gina was one of res on the pro- two pretty girls were the rec- in illustrated deserves good gtime playing, aritone soloist, p pictures came applause; Mr. deely the best ilire Brothers' es will be pro- here to-night. od, clean show, Company will

fant child of ng from chol- ters had given ry. I took a Colic Cholera to the house, e it would do to directions. ild had fully now vigorous recommended nd have never URTIS BAKER. ld by McVea Stewart, Moss

The very large number of persons who flock to the depot to meet the train shows that the summer homes and hotels are all filled with residents and visitors.

Prof. and Mrs. Frank S. Earle and sweet little daughter, Melaine Ruth, of Auburn, Ala., who are on their way to New Mexico, passed several days with friends here during the week.

Mr. Dan Ormond gave a delightful sail Monday, which was enjoyed by the following ladies and gentlemen: Misses Willie Billie, Louise and Inez Watts, Alice Maxey, Lucy Shannon, Mr. and Mrs. Ormond and Messrs. Sam Watts, Charley Brown and Frank J. Lundy.

Last Saturday afternoon, at 12:30 o'clock, Joseph Cachat, a pioneer resident of this place, died at his home, aged 77 years. He was a native of Barcelona, Spain. Two sons and a large number of relatives and friends mourn his demise. The funeral took place Sunday at 2:30 p. m. Interment at Catholic cemetery, Rev. H. Mortier performed the last sad rites.

Shanahan House arrivals: Jos. A. Craven, L. T. Kinn, J. L. Lavelle and wife, Wesley Lavelle, R. A. DeRussy, Mrs. S. J. DeLerno, Misses A. Lavelle, Lizzie B. Wolf, M. L. Lob, V. Fabian, Sam Weil, New Orleans; P. Sid Jones, Birmingham; T. Fitzgerald, A. M. Doyle, Gus Lebeck, W. Norton, S. Simmons, J. McDonnell, W. M. Sloan, Mobile.

On Tuesday about forty thousand pounds of wool was marketed here, and as much more will be brought in before the end of the week. The wool men who have been holding their clip for six weeks past, waiting for better prices, finally relented when the prices went up to 19½ cents, and sold to local buyers. F. J. Lundy and Davis Brothers are the heavy purchasers.

**VANCLEAVE ITEMS.**

BY THE REPORTERS.

A hot time in the old town last week.

Mr. Milstead and family have moved in town.

People will talk—and to themselves too.

The wedding bells are to ring pretty soon.

Miss Annie Murphy is visiting in Biloxi.

The picnic at Mr. A. W. Ramsay's was enjoyed by all.

Mr. J. M. Breeland and Rex Iryin Roberts are on the sick list.

Jack Fairley, a respectable colored man died here Saturday.

Miss Thueatt Hayens visited her sister, Mrs. Wm. Martin, last week.

Miss Chloee Roberts visited

Rev. T. W. Adams, of Brookhaven, former pastor of the Methodist church of this place, is here circulating among his friends, and will preach in the Methodist church here next Sunday morning and night.

The Hypanthean Society meeting, which was postponed because of the death of Dr. Chamberlin, will be held to-night at the residence of Mrs. J. J. Myer, when the same program will be rendered.

Seldom has the regret and sympathy of the entire community been so keenly awakened as by the death of Dr. John Benton Chamberlin, one of its most beloved members, which took place last Friday afternoon. For some years the Doctor has been failing in health, but his cheerfulness seldom forsook him, and his sufferings were never allowed to cast a gloom upon those with whom he came in contact. The end was not unexpected by the Doctor himself, it was looked forward to and prepared for bravely and calmly; for him death was, indeed, but the gateway into life—the transition from suffering into rest. To the bereaved young widow the deepest sympathy of every heart is tendered. If the consciousness of duty nobly done, of an almost heroic devotion to the beloved departed can bring comfort to the spirit, then, indeed, will her peace, even as her sorrow, be great beyond human understanding. Dr. Chamberlin was a native of Amite City, La., but moved to Moss Point in 1889, where he has practiced his profession ever since. The funeral took place Saturday afternoon, Rev. H. J. Cumpsten performed the burial ceremony, the interment being made in the Griffin cemetery.

On Wednesday, July 11, Mrs. Jesse Bounds entertained a few intimate friends at an informal reception, complimentary to her sister, Mrs. R. F. Cochran, of Meridian, who was her guest for a few days. The always delightful home of the hostess was doubly attractive upon the occasion.

with its garnishment of the flowers of the season. Several vocal selections were rendered by Miss Ivon Garner, and delicious refreshments served in the dining room by the dainty tea girls, Misses Sadie Henry and Lyll Morris. The little Misses Bounds, the tiny daughters of the house, flitted here and there among the guests and looked like veritable blossoms themselves in their charming gowns of airy summer fabrics. The infant daughter of Mrs. Cochran, Miss Caroline Cochran, made an early debut into society, and was brought into the drawing room to be presented to her mother's old-time friends. Mrs. Cochran, before her marriage, Miss Ame Edmonds, was one of the most popular young ladies of Moss Point, and her visit here was a delightful incident to

where you get painted in the b  
**PHONE 54.**  
L. N. DANTZLE  
Scranton and Pa  
April 20, 1900.

L. N. DANTZLE  
J. L. DANTZLE  
L. N.

L. N. DANT

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January 12, 1900.

**DR. A**  
D

Office residence  
June 29, 1900.

B. D. Valverde,  
Alley and  
men, \$2 each

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Pasc. Democrat-Sat July 20, 1900



Dec. 26, 1930

MRS. ANTHONY CATCHOT.

Mrs. Anthony Catchot died at her home here on Ford avenue on Friday, December 19, at 4 p. m. at the age of 58 years. She was born near Mobile, moving to Pascagoula at the age of 13, and was married 27 years ago. She was Miss Maggie Robins before her marriage. Deceased had been sick for the past two years, but was only seriously ill the day before her death.

The funeral was held from the residence on Ford avenue on Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock, Rev. E. L. Leebetter of the Methodist church, officiating. Interment was in Macpelah cemetery.

Besides her husband, she is survived by three children; Eddie George, Mrs. Hazel Sward and Mrs. Johnnie Ryans, of Pascagoula, two sisters; Mrs. Allen Everitt of Biloxi and Mrs. Ed. Seymour of Pascagoula, one brother, Robert Robins of Biloxi; five grandchildren and other relatives. ~~on~~ 12-26-30

The pall bearers were: J. B. Morgan, Julius Tillman, J. J. Dowdy, Joseph Rogers, John Logan and Lee Rouse.

Mrs. Anthony Catchot

Pascagoula

Mobile









Catchot  
50

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THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI JACKSON COUNTY

Personally appeared before me the undersigned authority in and for the said County and State, the above named \_\_\_\_\_ the male applicant, who says on oath that the names and things stated above are true and correct and that there is no lawful cause to obstruct the marriage between the said above named parties.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ A. D. 19\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
JACKSON COUNTY

MARRIAGE LICENSE

To Any Minister, Judge, Justice, or other person Lawfully Authorized to Celebrate the Rites of Matrimony:

You are hereby licensed to celebrate the Rites of Matrimony between Mr. William J. Catchot and Mrs. Ruby Lena Diamond and to so long as this shall be your Witness.

Witness my hand and official seal, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
JACKSON COUNTY

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

By virtue of a License from the Clerk of the Circuit Court of said County, I have this day celebrated the Rites of Matrimony between

Mr. William J. Catchot and Mrs. Ruby Lena Diamond

Witness my hand, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate filed and recorded, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_